

FULLER'S
SERMONS.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

Chap.

Copyright No.

7-21

BX 6333

Shelf F8S42

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.













W. Fuller

SERMONS

BY

✓

RICHARD FULLER,
11

PREACHED DURING HIS MINISTRY WITH THE
SEVENTH AND EUTAW PLACE BAPTIST CHURCHES,
BALTIMORE, 1847—1876.

PREPARED BY HIMSELF.

“QUISQUIS hæc legit, ubi pariter, certus est, pergat mecum ; ubi pariter hæsitat, quærat mecum ; ubi errorem suum cognoscit, redeat ad me ; ubi meum, revocet me.”—ST. AUGUSTINE, de Trin. i. 5.

17
1063

—
SECOND SERIES.
—

9603.47

Baltimore :

PUBLISHED BY JOHN F. WEISHAMPEL, JR.

PHILADELPHIA: AMERICAN BAPTIST PUBLICATION SOCIETY.

NEW YORK: SHELDON AND COMPANY.

[Copyright, 1877.]

1120
—
2

BX 6333

F&S42



4 ad 45

PREFACE.

—[From the First Series.]—

THE following Sermons are published in accordance with the dying request of their lamented author. Several years before his decease, Dr. Fuller prepared them for publication with especial care. Correcting his original notes, they were then placed in the hands of a friend to be copied. The copy was subsequently revised; and so thoroughly was the work done that when the manuscripts were opened, they were found to be in complete readiness for the press.

Posthumous discourses of eminent ministers are often given to the world. But these are generally selected by surviving friends from such imperfect materials as may be accessible. In this case we have those which the author himself designated for publication, and which received his final review. It is quite unusual for Pastors, amid the demands of their engrossing work, to prepare discourses to be read after they have ceased to speak. That two such volumes as are now presented to the public should be furnished by Dr. Fuller, is a witness both to his industry and his zeal in the service of Jesus.

It is probable that these Sermons are published nearly as they were delivered. It was the author's habit in preaching to have every important thought carefully premeditated. Not unfrequently he employed the very words which had been prearranged. Many will recognize in these glowing pages expressions often heard from the living voice. The language will serve to recall the tone, the features, the very gesture of the beloved speaker, though the eloquent tongue is silent; and impressions, partially effaced by time, will be revived. Others, who

CONTENTS.

	PAGE.
I. Predestination	7
II. Danger to the Soul from Lawful Things.....	32
III. The Kingdom of God cometh not with Observation..	49
IV. Jesus and the Three Disciples in Gethsemane.....	68
V. The Law and the Gospel.....	89
VI. The True Christian.....	112
VII. The Judgment.....	130
VIII. The Judgment.....	142
IX. Former Days.....	155
X. Dispositions under National Judgments.....	171
XI. A City or House Divided against Itself.....	196
XII. Strength as our Day.....	214
XIII. The Gospel Stifled by Covetousness.....	235
XIV. Mortification of Sin.....	251
XV. Fellowship in Christ's Sufferings.....	269
XVI. Elijah's Faith and Defect.....	290
XVII. Lord, to whom shall we go?.....	310
XVIII. A Precious Saviour.....	330



Sermon First.

PREDESTINATION.

“AND now I exhort you to be of good cheer; for there shall be no loss of any man’s life among you but of the ship. For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am and whom I serve, saying, Fear not Paul; thou must be brought before Cæsar; and lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee. And as the shipmen were about to flee out of the ship when they had let down the boat into the sea, under color as though they would have cast anchors out of the foreship, Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers, Except these abide in the ship ye cannot be saved.—ACTS xxvii: 22, 23, 24, 30, 31.

IT was Mr. Pitt, I believe, who, after reading Butler’s Analogy, remarked that “it suggested more doubts than it answered.” In removing one difficulty, we ought to be careful lest we create others which are greater.—However, in speaking of the deep things of God, all we can do is to shew how far the human understanding can go, when it ceases to obey reason, and debases itself to mere scholastic logic.

You are all familiar with the narrative of Paul’s shipwreck. In spite of some plausible objections, it is certain almost to demonstration that the vessel was lost upon the island now known as Malta. The whole description is very graphic; the impending danger; the commanding attitude of the Apostle during that fearful night; his inspiring address as the dim morning light reveals the terrified haggard company—two hundred and seventy-six in all—shivering on the deck of the sinking ship; the effect of his exhortation; and the rescue of all on board.

As you read the account, you feel that, if the sailors believed Paul’s declaration as to a revelation from heaven, it would put fresh heart in them to work, as it really did. Nor does it strike you that there is any contradiction be-

tween this positive assurance of safety to all and the subsequent warning as to the impossibility of saving the passengers unless the crew remained in the stranded bark.

Our philosophers, however, are astonished at your simplicity, and, of course, at the simplicity of the Apostle and the inspired historian. For if God had determined that all should reach the land in safety, how could it be affirmed that in any case some would be lost?

The Roman centurion had, I dare say, quite as much sagacity as these cavillers, yet he urged no objection, but at once complied with Paul's counsels. And just so now. When in earnest, no man ever pretends that predestination has anything to do with his free agency. No farmer—though in theology the most fierce hyper-Calvinist—was ever heard of, foolish enough to neglect the cultivation of his fields, because nothing can be left to contingencies, and, therefore, it is predetermined whether he shall reap a harvest or not. In a shipwreck no fatalist ever folded his arms, saying, "If I am to perish, I will perish; if I am to be saved, I will be saved." When danger presses, the peasant and the philosopher alike cry to God for deliverance, and put forth all their efforts. It is only in idle speculations, or when seeking to lull their consciences in impenitence and disobedience, that the enemies of God insult him, by pleading his decrees as a pretext for their indolence and passions.

I am going to offer you some thoughts upon this difficult subject, treating it first doctrinally, and then practically. It is very seldom that such abstruse discussions find a place in this pulpit; and now nothing is farther from my wishes than that any of you should be encouraged to leave the paths of pure undefiled simple piety, for the mysteries of tangled metaphysical polemics. "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God; but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law."

If we are properly engaged about the plain duties of the Gospel, we will not be tempted to perplex ourselves with the subtilties of controversial divinity, any more than will a traveller pressing homeward, wish to leap into

every quicksand that he may fathom its depths, or to rush into every thicket by the wayside that he may try how far he can penetrate. It was through pride of reasoning that man fell. Revelation constantly assails the arrogance which impiously arraigns the credibility of the divine word, unless our puny intellects can comprehend things which it is the glory of God to conceal. The design of the Gospel is to humble this temper, and to nourish in us the spirit of "a little child," without which the mind will go on sounding its dim and perilous way, till it is lost in endless mazes, bewildered inextricably in dark, interminable labyrinths.

As, however, men affecting to be wits and geniuses are, in books and in conversation, forever parading their flippancies on the question of predestination and free-agency, it is worth while to show them, once for all, how little they can take by their infidelity and ribaldry.

I. I am first to treat our subject doctrinally. And you see at once that it presents the very question which, century after century, has been the source of bitter controversy; which has not only supplied the sceptic with his sneers, but has exasperated pulpit against pulpit, church against church, and council against council.—The problem to which I refer is that of God's decrees and man's moral agency, to solve which two systems have been advocated, two parties have been formed. Let us examine each of these systems, let us hear each of these parties, whom—that I may avoid the shibboleths of hostile religious prejudices and factions—I will designate as the Libertarians and the Necessarians.

The Libertarians reject the doctrine of predestination; they deny that God has fore-ordained all things. But, now, can this negation be even mentioned without shocking our reason and our reverence for the oracles of eternal truth?

I might easily shew that nothing is gained by this denial, that it only removes the difficulty a little farther back. This system rejects predestination, and maintains that God has left all men to act as they choose. But what is meant by a man's acting as he chooses? It is, of course,

that he obeys the impulses of his own feelings and passions. Well, did not God endow him with these passions? Did not God know that if certain temptations assailed the creature to whom he had given these passions, he would fall? Did he not foresee that these temptations would assail him? Did he not permit these temptations to assail him? Could he not have prevented these temptations? Why did he form him with these passions? Why did he allow him to be exposed to these temptations? Why, in short—having a perfect fore-knowledge that such a being, so constituted and so tempted, would sin and perish—why did he create him at all? None will deny the divine fore-knowledge; and I at once admit that the mere foreseeing an event, which we cannot hinder and have no agency in accomplishing, does not involve us in any responsibility. But when the Creator, of his own sovereign pleasure, calls an intelligent agent into being, fashions him with certain powers and appetites, and places him amid scenes where he clearly sees that temptations will overcome him—in such a case it is self-evident that our feeble faculties cannot separate fore-knowledge from fore-appointment. The denial of pre-ordination does not, therefore, at all relieve any objection, it only conceals the difficulty from the ignorant and unthinking.

But even if the theory of the Libertarians were not a plain evasion, it would be impossible for us to accept such a solution; for it dethrones Jehovah; it surrenders the entire government of the world to mere chance, to wild caprice and disorder. According to this system, nature, providence, grace are only departments of atheism; God has no control over the earth and its affairs; or—if that be too monstrous and revolting,—he exercises authority over matter, but none over the minds and hearts of men. “The king’s heart is in the hands of the Lord, as rivers of water, he turneth it whithersoever he will;”—such is the declaration of the Holy Spirit; but this theory rejects this truth. God exercises no control over men’s hearts, consequently prophecy is an absurdity; providence is a chimera; prayer is a mockery; since God does not interfere in mortal events, but

abandons all to the wanton humors and passions of myriads of independent agents, none of whose whims and impulses he restrains, by whom his will is constantly defeated and trampled under foot. A creed so odious, so abhorrent to all reason and religion, need only be carried out to its consequences, and no sane mind can adopt it.

And this heresy is condemned on every page of the Bible. It is deeply to be lamented that theological partisans so often treat texts of Scripture, as hired advocates in our courts treat those witnesses whose evidence damages their cause,—cross examining and brow-beating the clearest passages,—seeking to perplex their plain meaning—and to extort from them a testimony they will not and cannot give. But, after all ingenuity has been exhausted, how unequivocal is the language of inspiration. “The counsel of the Lord standeth forever, the thought of his heart to all generations;” “All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing, he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou;” “And they prayed and said, Lord shew whether of these two thou hast chosen; that he may take part of this ministry and apostleship;” “Whom God did foreknow he did predestinate, moreover whom he did predestinate them he also called;” “Being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsels of his own will.” Passages like these might be easily multiplied, but I prefer to take another course, and to establish the doctrines of the Sacred Oracles by a sort of proof which is very striking, and which silences all cavil and sophistry.

The depositions to which I now refer are gathered from those narratives in which man’s free agency is taken for granted or expressly affirmed, while at the same time, the entire event is ascribed directly to God’s over-ruling decrees. Let us turn for a moment to these records, and let us begin with the transportation of Joseph into Egypt. Read the history of his mission to his brethren, of the conspiracy among these brethren to slay him, of

Reuben's scheme to save his life and restore him to his father, of the arrival of the Ishmaelite merchants, of Judah's proposition to sell him to them, and of the cruel and unnatural traffic. There never was a transaction in which human passions—envy, hatred, revenge, cupidity—were more confessedly the sole ruling cause and motive from first to last. "And the patriarchs," said Stephen, "moved with envy, sold Joseph into Egypt." Yet the result, from beginning to end, is ascribed to God's purpose and decree. "And Joseph said unto his brethren, Be not grieved nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither, for God did send me before you to preserve life. So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God." And the Psalmist utters the same declaration. "He sent a man before them, even Joseph, who was sold as a servant, whose feet they hurt with fetters, he was laid in irons until the time that his word came, the word of the Lord tried him."

Take, next, the fatal obduracy of Pharaoh. In the book of Genesis it is repeatedly said that "Pharaoh hardened his heart and sinned yet the more," but in the same chapters it is declared that "The Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh." And in the Epistle to the Romans it is written, "For the Scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout the earth."

In the first book of Kings, the people appeal to Rehoboam, to abate a portion of the burden under which they groaned. That monarch seeks the counsel, first of the old men, the former companions of his father, and then of the young men who had grown up with him. Wilfully rejecting the sage advice of the elders, he adopts the tyrannical measures recommended by the passions of his youthful associates. The consequence is, the revolt of the ten tribes. Here was an arbitrary decree of a despot, instigated by an evil heart and evil counsellors; yet the whole is attributed directly to God's decree. "The king hearkened not unto the people; for the cause was from the Lord, that he might perform his saying, which the Lord spake by Abijah the Shilonite unto Jeroboam the Son of Nebat."

In the same regal history, Ahab disobeys God; and the prophet is sent to warn him that, as a punishment, he shall be slain in battle. The monarch disguises himself so that he is not known; and "a certain man drew a bow at a venture, and smote the king of Israel between the joints of the harness, and he died." The archer aimed his shaft at no one, but discharged it "at a venture" against the confused masses. Yet it was winged and guided by God's unerring decree.

In the entire volume of the Book nothing is more fearful than the epitaph upon the soul of Judas Iscariot, spoken by the Saviour himself, "It had been good for that man if he had not been born." You at once perceive that this sentence consigned him to everlasting misery. The Universalist can never evade this passage. For if, after myriads of ages, the lost soul shall be released and translated to heaven, those centuries of wretchedness will be only as a moment, as nothing, compared with an eternity of happiness; and it would not then be true that the culprit had better never been born. But now this treason—though instigated purely by covetousness, the ruling passion of the apostate—was a part of God's pre-arranged purpose. "None of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the Scriptures might be fulfilled;" "The Son of Man goeth as it is written of him, but woe unto that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed, it had been good for that man if he had not been born;" "Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled which the Holy Spirit, by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus."

In fine, the great catastrophe of the Bible, the crucifixion of the Redeemer; if ever a deed was perpetrated by cruel relentless malignity, it was the murder of that innocent benefactor of mankind. The actors in that tragedy were charged with heinous guilt in having "killed the Prince of life," whom "with wicked hands they crucified and slew." Nor did these murderers attempt any palliation. "They were pricked to the heart," and cried out in anguish, "What shall we do?" Yet this conspiracy and its triumph only accomplished the

predeterminations of eternal wisdom and love. "Those things which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled." "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and fore-knowledge of God, ye have taken and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." "For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together: for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done."

If anything be certain, then, it is that the anti-predeterminarian system is wholly untenable. It is good for nothing, since it solves no difficulty, it stultifies our reason, it is practical atheism, and it contradicts the express assertions of the Bible.

This argument is highly pleasing to some of you, I perceive. I read your approbation in your countenances. I see you are ready to come forward and extend to me the hand of fellowship and cordial congratulation. Certainly, I hear you exclaim, all that you have advanced is incontestable; it is just what we firmly believe. None but an idiot can reject the doctrine of predestination. Reason and Scripture both condemn the heresy which leaves man a free independent agent. We have always maintained this, and your reasoning ought to silence the presumption of those who proudly arrogate liberty of will and action. The men who thus speak belong to the other class I have mentioned; they are Necessarians; they hold that God not only foreknows but fore-determines all things; that his decree controls irresistibly all matter, all mind, all feeling, all action; and, therefore, that man's free agency is a tenet false, unscriptural, and absurd. Let us turn to this system, and examine it for a moment. Now, in the very outset we encounter one objection to this creed, which amounts to a refutation, and which nothing can remove; it is the consciousness of free will and free agency which every man carries in his own bosom. Reason, refine, cavil as we may, one thing is certain, we feel that we are free agents. Consciousness is an inward faculty which in-

forms us of what passes within us; and its intuitions are conclusive and final as to the principles of our mental constitution,—just as the authority of the senses convinces us of what takes place in the outward world.—No matter what metaphysicians and schoolmen say, I am not more sure that I see the sun in the heavens, than that I act in accordance with my own unrestrained volitions. Suppose a man should construct an ingenious argument to prove that you do not see and cannot walk. You might not be able to detect the fallacy of his reasoning, but so long as you do see and do walk, you know that his logic is all false.

Just so in the case before us; the testimony of the interior sense is equally conclusive against all specious denials of our freedom. Indeed, if our will and conduct are not free, they are, of course, under compulsion; and it is impossible for conscience either to approve or to condemn our actions or our motives; the deliberate murderer is no more guilty than the innocent victim of brute force who, in spite of his protestations, is compelled to discharge a pistol into the breast of a stranger.

Whatever theological dogmas men may adopt, there are some original truths written in the very structure of our nature, and our moral responsibility is one of these primary truths.

But let us look a little more closely at this scheme of necessity, and see if it does not conduct us to issues quite as monstrous as those which have just shocked us in the opposite system. If man is not free, what then? Why, then, he is not accountable when he sins. If man be forced by necessity, it is absurd to predicate any moral quality of his actions, to call them either good or evil.—If man be compelled, it is impossible to deny that God is the author of sin—of all the sin which is perpetrated.—From conclusions so profane and repulsive as these, even the hyper-Calvinist and fatalist shrink back, yet they are committed inevitably to them by their creed.

This is not all. The system of the Necessarians is condemned by the Scriptures as unequivocally as that of their opponents. The cases which I have just now cited to establish the doctrine of predestination, are equally

convincing as to man's free moral agency. For you remember that the inspired writers expressly charge the crimes upon their authors, without the slightest intimation that God's decrees have anything to do with man's guilt. In fact, they announce each of the doctrines now before us in the same sentence without any attempt to reconcile them, without seeming to be aware of any sort of contradiction between them. Recall the illustrations I submitted to you a moment since—the cases of Joseph, of Pharaoh, of Ahab, or Rehoboam, of Judas, of the crucifixion—and you will find them just as incontestable with reference to Liberty as to Necessity. They take for granted man's free agency, as well as God's sovereign and universal control. Indeed, it is manifest that every call, every threat, every expostulation, every exhortation in the Bible supposes that man is a free agent. If he be not free, if he be the passive victim of inexorable, irresistible destiny, the Sacred Volume is a compilation of glaring inconsistencies—of sheer downright falsehood and mockery. If a fixed fate has fore-doomed men as mere machines, how can God utter those tender complaints of their conduct with which the Scriptures abound? If his decrees compel men, how can he so earnestly admonish and beseech them to repent and turn from their evil ways? If men are forced by God's pre-ordination, how can he utter that assurance, "As I live, I desire not the death of the sinner, but that he turn and live?" How could Jesus affirm that, if the mighty works done in Chorazin "had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes," and that if the mighty works done in Capernaum "had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day?" In a word, if God's purposes bind men inflexibly in chains, what is the meaning of that touching, weeping exclamation, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not. Behold your house is left unto you desolate"?

If you have followed me, I think you will confess now, that neither of the two classes indicated can be right.

The Libertarian is plainly in error when he rejects the doctrine of predestination ; and the Necessarian is as plainly in error when he rejects the doctrine of free agency. And these are the only two parties. I am aware that some theologians profess to belong to a third and moderate school ; and they undertake to reconcile the difficulties of our subject by this solution :—that God who appoints the end, appoints also the means. This is the proposition advanced by Dr. Chalmers in an admirable sermon upon the very text now before us. It is no doubt very true ; but it elucidates nothing, it only removes the difficulty one step farther. The advocates of this thesis do not belong to a third class, they are Necessarians, and ascribe all events to God's decrees as rigorously as if no agent had been employed. In a former part of this discourse I remarked, that those who admit God's foreknowledge, but deny his fore-appointment, gain nothing by the discrimination ; since, in the Creator, our minds can draw no distinction between foreseeing and fore-ordaining. I make a similar observation now as to the interposition of a medium. Nothing is gained by it. The unthinking may be thus satisfied ; but it is an old axiom, that he who performs an act by another, performs it himself. In human affairs God never acts immediately, except when working miracles ; he uses instruments and agents. These, of course, are chosen by him ; and if they are necessitated by his decrees—as is supposed in the case before us—the introduction of one or many agencies produces no modification in the system, which is that of mechanical force and stern compulsion. In these assemblies where you are compelled to listen in silence, a preacher may think that he has triumphed, when he thus disposes of an objection ; but he deceives himself. His hearers see clearly that he has not fairly met the difficulty ; he has only shifted it a little out of sight.

In the recital from which our text is taken Paul announced, by express revelation from heaven, that not a soul on board the ship should perish. Yet when the seamen were about to leave in the boats, he as confidently declared that unless they remained in the vessel the passengers could not be saved. According to the interme-

diate system, the Apostle was very inconsistent in this last admonition; since he must have seen clearly that if God had predetermined the salvation of all, he had also indefeasibly adjusted the means, and that his decree could no more be frustrated by the treachery of the mariners than by the winds and the waves.

In reference to predestination and free agency there are, then, only two systems—that of the Libertarians, and that of the Necessarians. These schemes seem to our minds not only irreconcilable, but antagonistical. Yet the rejection of either involves us in consequences absurd and impious. And what is still more confounding, the Bible with a directness and plainness admitting of no dispute or evasion, inculcates both of these conflicting doctrines, requiring our unmutilated faith in each, without even noticing the inscrutable difficulty and seemingly palpable contradiction by which our intellects are bewildered.

Thus perplexed and staggered, what are we to do? Thus far we have only been entangling ourselves in a labyrinth; following first a path which leads one way; then returning and pursuing another path running in the opposite direction; but every attempt involving us more inextricably until we feel hopelessly lost. What are we to do? It is evident that there is only one hope left us. We must confess our absolute blindness, and procure a guide who comprehends all the dark intricacies; one in whom we have perfect confidence; who can and will conduct us safely; and we must surrender ourselves to him. Suppose that two men born blind were to enter into a dispute as to the color of an object; one affirming that it is red; the other that it is blue. It is clear that these discussions would be simple absurdities; since neither of them possesses that sense by which color can be known. Mr. Locke gives the case of a blind man who insisted that he knew what the color scarlet resembled; and when asked what, he answered "The sound of a trumpet." Their controversy could be decided only in one way. An umpire must be found who can see; and who will decide the question truly; and they must submit to his arbitrament. This analogy

illustrates exactly our condition as to the subject before us, which is confessedly beyond the reach of human faculties. But, now, can we secure such a guide as we have described? Where is the arbiter to be found, who perfectly comprehends these deep things of God, and to whom we may with perfect confidence refer the difficulty?

My brethren, the guide, the arbiter we seek is before us. It is God himself. He understands fully his decrees; he also comprehends man's free agency; and he declares as we have seen, that all our speculations are wrong; that both these doctrines are true; and, of course, that there is no discrepancy between them. I have shown that it is impossible for us to reject either of these great truths, and it is equally impossible for our minds to reconcile them. But here, as everywhere, faith must come to our aid, teaching us to repose unquestioningly upon God's veracity; reminding us that "Secret things belong unto the Lord our God;" and rebuking the arrogance which demands that our intellects shall penetrate and reconcile those thoughts of the divine mind which are as high above our thoughts as the heavens are above the earth. With unspeakable condescension, God constantly invites us to confer and plead with him. "Come now," he says, "let us reason together." Only once, in all the Scriptures, does he silence the arguments of man by a stern abrupt assertion of his sovereignty; and this is when an inquisitive objector has assumed the attitude of a caviller who, daring to believe less and presuming to comprehend more than is revealed, finds fault with his decrees because, as he pretends, they destroy man's moral freedom. It is this very presumption the Apostle cuts short by that sudden retort, "Nay, but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God?"

The pillar by which Jehovah led his people was luminous all night long, but in the day it became an impenetrable column of murky cloud; and it is thus God now reveals himself to us. His precepts and our duty are all so plain, that the wayfaring man though a fool need not err therein; but if, instead of pursuing our way humbly and earnestly, we seek to fathom the abysses of his adorable wisdom, we are baffled; clouds and darkness are

round about him, "he makes darkness his secret place, his pavilions round about him are dark waters and thick clouds of the skies." And, as in the wilderness the blackness proclaimed the majestic presence as gloriously as the splendor, so now, "it is the glory of God to conceal a thing." His independence, his infinite superiority to all creatures, that reverential awe which is due to such a Being, require that much in his providence and everything in his secret counsels shall be inscrutable to man.

If from Paul the traveller, animating his harrassed tempest-tossed fellow voyagers, we turn to Paul the theologian, and ask, how the immutable purposes of God can be harmonized with the perfect freeness of men; he does not attempt to gratify our curiosity, he has but one answer, he exclaims, "O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out." And this temper—this humble confession of our incompetency, this profound submission of our reason to mysteries which are above us—is taught not only by inspiration but by natural reason. We have taken our text from the travels of an Apostle, let us borrow from another traveler a case of casuistry which has been well cited by his illustrious countryman, and which ought to be profitable to many now before me. This acute and accurate author has recorded much useful information concerning the Persians; and he tells us that among those Mohammedans the duty of remembering the limits of the human understanding is inculcated by the following curious anecdote.

"There were once three brethren who all died at the same time. The two first were men; the eldest having always lived in a habit of obedience to God; the second, on the contrary, in a course of disobedience and sin. The third was an infant incapable of distinguishing good from evil. These three brothers appeared before the tribunal of God; the first was received into Paradise, the second was condemned to hell, the third was sent to a middle place where there was neither pleasure nor pain, because he had not done either good or evil. When

the youngest heard his sentence, and the reasons on which the supreme Judge grounded it, grieved to be excluded from Paradise, he exclaimed, Ah, Lord, hadst thou preserved my life as thou didst that of my good brother, how much better would it have been for me. I should have lived as he lived, and then I should have enjoyed as he does the happiness of eternal glory. My child, replied God to him, I knew thee, and I knew, that hadst thou lived longer, thou wouldst have lived like thy wicked brother, and like him wouldst have rendered thyself deserving of the punishment of hell. The condemned brother, hearing this discourse of God, exclaimed, Ah, Lord, why didst thou not confer the same favor upon me as upon my younger brother, by depriving me of a life which I have so wickedly misspent as to bring myself under a sentence of condemnation? I preserved thy life, said God, to give thee an opportunity of saving thyself. The younger brother, hearing this reply, exclaimed again, Ah, why then, my God, didst thou not preserve my life also, that I might have had an opportunity of saving myself? God, to put an end to complaining and disputing, replied, Because my decree had determined otherwise."

Let us, my brethren, study this fable, and be instructed by these ingenious heathen. Other teachers begin by proposing to their scholars the examples of those who have distinguished themselves in learning. Jesus commences by setting before us a little child, and requiring us to cultivate an humble, docile temper. The fact is, we are familiar with *names*, and we mistake this for a knowledge of *things*; we adopt a system and love that more than truth. The inspired writers never set themselves to build up well adjusted scientific schemes, they simply announce "God's testimony." But *we* must compact the truths revealed into a regular symmetrical body of divinity; we examine the Sacred Oracles, not to learn all they disclose, but with a fixed determination to defend our theory. Hence we study, not the Bible in its amplitude, but the authors who advocate our dogmas. And hence, too, we seek to wrest those Scriptures which conflict with the beauty and harmony of our ingeniously constructed systems.

Do you receive the doctrine of predestination? Certainly. To reject it, I would have to stultify my intellect, to discard prophecy, which is based upon this truth, to abjure the unequivocal teachings of the Bible, to believe that God had abandoned the earth to chance and disorder, and to plunge into I know not what absurdities. Well, then you do not receive the doctrine of man's free agency. Indeed I do; for otherwise I must renounce my own distinct consciousness, I must disbelieve the Scriptures, I must make God the author and yet the punisher of sin, I must precipitate myself into I know not what absurdities. I embrace both doctrines. Nay, more; I see clearly that if I reject either of these great truths and cling to the other, it will tow me away into fathomless depths of folly and impiety. But, how do you reconcile these two doctrines? Reconcile! I do not reconcile them at all. I am not required to reconcile them. Who made me a judge and reconciler of God's acts and attributes and clearly revealed testimonies? No, my brethren; let us rather with Job exclaim, "Behold I am vile, what shall I answer thee? I will lay my hand upon my mouth. Once have I spoken, but I will not answer; yea, twice, but I will proceed no farther. Lo, these are parts of thy ways, but how little a portion is heard of him. I know that thou canst do everything; therefore have I uttered that I understood not, things too wonderful for me which I knew not. Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is high as heaven, what canst thou do? deeper than hell, what canst thou know?"

For my own part, as I contemplate these two grand doctrines I seem to see two parallel lines stretching away into eternity, with thousands of other lines, all of which my vision can pursue but a little way. How they can ever meet, or whether they meet at all, I have no means of deciding. They appear to be ultimate facts, between which we can discover no links, but which are perfectly harmonious in the Divine Mind. We can discern no connection between them; but it is preposterous to affirm that there is collision;—*pre-posterous* in the exact meaning of the word, since a pre-requisite to such an assertion is a knowledge which we cannot possess.

When I affirm two distinct truths, you never refuse to believe each unless I can shew some connection between them. "There is such a country as England." "The sun is shining brightly." What would you think of his intellect who should say, Both these propositions are clear, but I will not receive them unless you show me the relation between them. Such a man you would pronounce a lunatic. Very well, now apply this reasoning to the doctrines before us. "God has pre-ordained all things."—"Man is a free responsible agent." Neither of these propositions can be denied; why do you reject either of them, unless I can shew the connection between them? You will reply, Because they contradict each other. Now, this I deny, and this you cannot possibly prove. The whole matter is reduced to this single question: Can God fore-ordain all things, and yet form an intelligent being who shall be a perfectly free, moral, accountable agent? And it is clearly preposterous for any finite mind to attempt to answer that question; for the decision demands omniscience. God only can solve that problem, and, as we have his solution,—as he declares that he has peopled the earth with beings as free as if there were no decrees—our duty is plain. In this, as in other mysteries of Godliness, our speculations must cease, we must subject our "philosophy and vain deceit" to the decisions of Revelation. Reason must ascertain what God says, and then both faith and reason must acquiesce in humility and reverence.

True wisdom is always humble. The wisdom which descendeth from above is so profoundly humble that it at once confesses its ignorance, and says, "If any man think that he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know." It feels that all our present knowledges are only puerilities which will be put aside when we become men—a sort of nescience which "shall vanish away" when our minds are emancipated from darkness. There is a region of truth inaccessible to argument and logic; there is a "sea of light" before whose excess of brightness our feeble intellects are dazzled into utter blindness. These domains we may one day fully penetrate. Now we can reach them, not by reasoning,

but only by childlike love. And for true spiritual wisdom only one course remains. As to predestination and other kindred subjects, we must "have faith in God;" we must not expect to comprehend all the parts and bearings of all things revealed in the Bible; we must never carry our systems farther than the teachings of the Word will justify; especially we must never impinge upon the clear doctrines of revelation. A profound philosopher has well remarked that "the wall of adamant which bounds human enquiry has scarcely ever been discovered by any adventurer until he has been roused by the shock which drove him back." All which is necessary to the perfect repose of a devout mind, is the knowledge, either that the truth has been ascertained, or that it is inaccessiblely concealed in the abysses of light in which God dwells. As to the abstruse topics upon which we have been meditating, we may, therefore, rest from all speculations with perfect confidence. If we attempt to explain and reconcile the doctrines of predestination and free agency, we find impassable barriers hemming us in, and sharp adamant striking us back. But the proofs of these doctrines are irrefragable. Their harmony we must leave with God; it is an ultimate fact transcending our thoughts; but clear to that Intellect which is the supreme fountain of all light and love.

II. So much for our text treated doctrinally. The few moments which remain I devote to the practical lessons of our subject, for these are very important; darkness serving us for light; darkness teaching us more than light—even as night reveals more of the starry glories of the firmament than the day.

And, first, it will not be in vain that I have conducted you through the intricacies of this discussion, if, once for all, we learn the folly of human wisdom, when in the presence of the deep things of God; if we are convinced that the philosopher must discard his "oppositions of science falsely so called," and must, with the peasant, meekly receive the communications which God has vouchsafed to man. Those who cavil at the mysteries of revelation, and those who pretend to solve them, always affect su-

perior wisdom and penetration ; but in fact they only betray a want of thought. I do not understand everything connected with this proposition, therefore I cannot believe it; the man who reasons thus will have a very short creed, for what truth is there, even in nature, which does not involve mysteries? Such language is simply foolish. For, whatever be the obscurities and difficulties of the Gospel, there is nothing in them unworthy of a religion which is divine, they are "mysteries of godliness" inspiring sacred veneration, teaching us to be holy. And whatever system we may seek to substitute for the Gospel—the religion of nature, infidelity, atheism—we cannot escape mysteries; we can explain nothing; we can only lose ourselves in fresh obscurities and difficulties.—In heaven God promises that all shall be explained, as far as finite intellects can comprehend his conduct and perfections; but at present, every reflecting mind confesses that we are surrounded on every side by inexplicable enigmas. If anything be certain, if anything be true, elevating, worthy of all our confidence, it is the revelation contained in the Bible. Abandon that and we must surrender ourselves to universal scepticism.

There is even among those who profess to be Christians a want of that full confidence which the Bible challenges as a revelation from God. We must correct this lurking infidelity. When we consider God's relation to us, and the incompetency of nature and reason to instruct us as to our future destiny, a communication directly from heaven seems to be an indispensable part of the divine intercourse with this earth. And supposing that God's goodness and justice would cause him to make a revelation to man, there are only two ways by which it can be authenticated. There are, first, credentials conclusive to the mind; and secondly, internal evidence which convinces the heart—for the heart has its reasonings, and in religion they are prompter and surer than the deductions of the intellect.

Now, examined by each of these tests, the Sacred Oracles establish at once and forever their divine origin; and reason tells us that her highest office is to receive in all their integrity the things which "eye hath not seen, nor

ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, but which God hath revealed by his Spirit." To require God to reveal nothing which we cannot comprehend, is to demand of him more than he has done for unfallen angels, more than he can possibly do for any finite being. These pretexts are the stale cavils of philosophy flown with vanity and conceit. They are not only insane, but impious; for have these men any claims upon God? In a word, they are manifestly but the shifts and mere subterfuges of an evil heart; since if these objectors knew all they demand to know, their duty could not be made any plainer than it now is.

Theological prejudices are proverbially inveterate, and I do not expect that the arguments urged in this discourse will detach a single partizan from the creed to which he has long been bigoted; but surely the incomprehensibility of the divine mind ought to rebuke the fierce controversies which too often embitter the hearts of Christians; in waging which they entirely forget the admonition, that—though we understand all mysteries and all knowledge—we are nothing without charity. Marcellus said that, with all his imperial power, Tiberius Cæsar could not give currency to a new word. Sectarian gladiators have unhappily invented and consecrated a good many new words, which have become the shibboleths of strife, bitterness and persecution. The two parties whom I have called Libertarians and Necessarians are well known in the churches by other names. And they have often been arrayed in hostile attitudes against each other, urging a war of uncompromising intolerance; for this is a melancholy fact that it has generally been about polemical abstractions, scarcely ever about moral duties, that theologians have fulminated their anathemas. Each of these factions has much truth; but each overlooks the fact that, as a mist is more dangerous than darkness, so partial truth is one of the most dangerous forms of error; that the most effectual method of perverting the Bible is to garble its teachings; and each has pushed its system, so far as to trench upon other truths. How much uncharitableness, strife, hatred, malice would be avoided,—what peace, love, harmony would adorn the churches—if

these partizans loved their dogmas less, and the unmutated Scriptures more; if they would conquer their prejudices; if, instead of presumptuously seeking to reconcile God's ways, they would remember that what seem discords to us, are only hidden, pre-established harmonies, which shall one day fill us with admiration and adoration; if, in short,—instead of a mistaken, harsh, hard orthodoxy—they possessed more of that reverence which is the sublimest faculty of man's nature, before which self is humbled into nothing, and God's ways are a vast infinitude edged with intolerable radiance—eternity spreading all around it and stretching far away as its background.

The subject we have been discussing applies to our duties. Let us pray for grace that we may acquiesce in all the mysteries of God's sovereignty, and yet hold inviolate all the strenuous activities of the life of faith. In a revelation from heaven there must be some mysteries; there will be much that no thought of man can fully reach—since it is wrapped in the very light in which God dwells unapproachably. But we would expect his will concerning us to be distinctly announced. And so we find it.—Whatever is obscure, we clearly see our duty. In the narrative before us, there was no sort of doubt as to what was to be done. The assurance from heaven not only did not relax the earnestness of the Apostle and the seamen, but it inspired fresh strength and ardor. And thus, if we are sincere, will it be with us in our religious duties. Take prayer, for example. God promises to answer prayer, and we know he does answer prayer. Let us not perplex ourselves by curious speculations as to the manner in which our petitions can be granted, and how the prevalence of our supplications can consort with God's unchangeableness. Prayer is the cry of human weakness, guilt and misery. If we are thoroughly in earnest, we will be encouraged by God's promises; nor can any objection be drawn from the divine immutability, which would not equally prevent our planting, or toiling, or employing any means whatever to attain an object.

Again, we are under the most solemn obligations to seek the salvation of men; and we are only folding about us

a fatal illusion, if we hope to escape this responsibility by pleading any decrees of God. When Paul was vehemently opposed in Corinth, the Lord said to him, "Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace, for I have much people in this city." Does the Apostle argue that if God had much people in the city, it was unnecessary for him to labor and expose himself to suffering? Just the reverse. He devotes himself with renewed zeal to his work, and in this he furnishes a pattern to us, and a reproof to that antinomianism which has too long been a pretext for indolence, covetousness, perfidiousness in the churches.

Lastly, and above all, let us learn to work out our "own salvation with fear and trembling." As a motive to this duty, the Scriptures assure us that "it is God who worketh in us." Let us admit all the force and comprehensiveness of this motive. God worketh in me; then I can work. God worketh in me; then I will work. God worketh in me; then I must work.

Amidst all our ignorance and weakness, what we most clearly perceive is, the transcendent importance of religion, the love of God, the atonement of the Cross and salvation through that atonement. Jesus Christ has come into the world to save sinners. His blood cleanses from all sin. The Holy Spirit can deliver us from all our corruptions. The Gospel is adapted to all our wants, and offers us its treasures without money and without price. All this we know. And we know, too, that God's hidden decrees do not at all affect our conduct and character. You are shocked at the guilt of Judas and of the murderers of Christ. No ingenuity can persuade you that they were innocent because their passions were overruled and accomplished what God had fore-ordained.—Your conscience, then, seconds the declarations of the Bible on this subject. And your reason seconds your conscience; for, after all your syllogisms to prove that the divine purposes hold and control man, nobody could induce you to leap into the sea, or to throw yourself from the summit of a precipice.

Apply this reasoning to the concerns of your soul.—Lost and ruined as we are, a great salvation has been pro-

vided for us, and it is yours by faith in Jesus. God repels no imputation with such intense abhorrence as that which charges him with desiring the death of any sinner. "Oh, Israel," he exclaims, "thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thy help." "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die?" Having—at such expense—wrought out a wonderful atonement, Jesus now calls you to turn to him and accept a full deliverance; he assures you he is not willing that "any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." "Come unto me," he cries, "and him that cometh I will in no wise cast out."

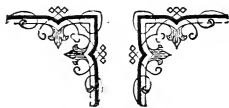
But, still—as Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers, "Except these abide in the ship ye cannot be saved"—so I tell you this day, that unless you are found in Christ, you cannot be saved. It has been well remarked, that any fool can ask questions which no wise man can answer; and the simplest man in that laboring vessel might have proposed just such impertinent enquiries as we now every day hear. If God have decreed that all of us shall be saved, how can the escape of the sailors reverse that decree? If Infinite Wisdom and Power have predetermined that "not a hair shall fall from the head of any of us," why need we take some meat"? why "lighten the ship and cast out the wheat into the sea"? why loose the rudder bands and hoist up the mainsail to the wind"? why need some "swim" and the rest seize upon "boards and broken pieces of the ship"? These and similar questions any idiot might have asked; but no man was idiot enough to waste time in such casuistry. On a sinking vessel people find very little edification in metaphysical dialectics; they are altogether too much in earnest to bewilder their minds with these unprofitable subtilities. In the hour of danger, he would be regarded as a lunatic, who should stop to reason as our pretended philosophers reason. Had any one of the passengers refused to bestir himself and resolved to stand by his orthodoxy, he would certainly have been drowned, in spite of all his unanswerable logic. And so, my friends, if

you neglect the great salvation, you cannot escape; you will perish, and all your pleas and pretences will only expose you to shame and everlasting contempt.

Be warned, be wise, before it is forever too late. O, think, how short and uncertain your life is. Consider how perilous it is thus to defer that surrender to Jesus, which the word and providence and Spirit of God have so long been urging, and which you have so often secretly resolved upon. What is the great concern? What? you reply, why the salvation of my soul, certainly. To abandon sin, to overcome the fatal spirit of procrastination, to receive the Gospel on the terms of the Gospel, to take up the cross and follow Jesus—this is the first, great concern. Such, my dear hearer, has been your confession a hundred times; such is your confession now. But what then? Alas, you have lived, and you will leave this house to go on living, as if salvation were the only affair unworthy of your serious attention. Lay these things solemnly to heart. Go not all the way to the judgment, to discover that your destruction is unnecessary and willful and wanton.

Or, if you are bent on self-destruction—if no entreaties from God, no restraints of his providence, no solicitations of the Spirit, no expostulations, no tears of your Saviour can stop you—at least do not insult Heaven by pretending that you are waiting for more effectual influences.—This plea admits that you feel some strivings of the Holy Ghost; why do you not comply with these? Why resist these, and desire more powerful movements? What is this, but openly to proclaim that you will try conclusions with the Almighty? that you are resolved to strive against your Maker, to yield nothing to him willingly, to defy him as long as you can, and only to submit to a sad necessity when he shall compel you? Is there anything in Revelation—do you seriously think there is anything in the secret counsels of eternity—to justify the hope that God will thus be appeased? What, my beloved friend, what can you expect from such deliberate, unrelenting opposition to the Sovereign of the Universe?—What must be the issue of such an unequal, disastrous, desperate conflict?

Let me adjure you—by the mercies of God and by the unspeakable danger of your soul, with only a brief and uncertain remnant of life left you—to adopt a different course. “Hear ye and give ear; be not proud, for the Lord hath spoken. Give glory to the Lord your God, before he cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains.” He is the incomprehensible Jehovah; but the mysteriousness of his counsels casts no obscuration over his wisdom and love. It is a subliming, rejoicing exercise of faith, to feel that in God’s ways there are heights and depths far out of our sight; to submit wholly to him; to ascribe all honor and salvation to him—of whom and through whom, and to whom are all things; to whom be glory forever. AMEN.



Sermon Second.

DANGER TO THE SOUL FROM LAWFUL THINGS.

“AND as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be in the days of the Son of Man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of Man shall be revealed.”—LUKE xvii: 26—30.

“THE flood came and destroyed them all.” What were they doing? What heinous and unheard of wickedness were they perpetrating, that thus the foundations of the great deep are broken up, and the devouring ocean swallows them? Would you know what they were doing? “They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all.” “*It rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all.*” Horrible doom; and in what hideous rebellion against God were they banded, that the sluices of vengeance are thus loosened and whole cities blended in one red burial? “They did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all.”

I need not remind you that in other portions of the Bible these tragedies are mentioned as proofs of God's

abhorrence of sin. Here Jesus refers to them for a different purpose. He here warns us against the danger of neglecting salvation because incessantly occupied with the cares, duties, pleasures of the present life. In the parable of the supper those who declined the invitation were very respectful; each saying, "I pray thee, have me excused;" and their excuses were drawn from things in themselves proper. "The first said, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it; another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them; and another said, I have married a wife." In our text we are admonished that death and the judgment will fatally surprise men, not so much because they are leading vicious lives, as because they are absorbed by the urgencies, activities, and enjoyments of the world and thus wholly forget that eternity, preparation for which is the great business, the most pressing duty of every human being.

I. Men and brethren, the lesson of this morning deeply concerns us all. There is often the greatest danger where none is suspected. The text was addressed to the Saviour's disciples, and its solemn alarm is for the church as well as the world. "*Licitis perimus omnes.*" Lawful things are the most fatal snares. Hear me, then, carefully upon this topic; and let us begin by enquiring when things in themselves proper become criminal and dangerous to the soul. Nor is the answer difficult; it is in the verses before us.

For Jesus here warns us that lawful things become sins, when they so engross our lives as to prevent our giving to our spiritual interests the time which should be theirs. "They bought, they sold, they planted, they builded." Earthly cares, pursuits, schemes, investments, gains possessed all their thoughts, consumed all their attention.

Sabbath after Sabbath I have the serious task of ministering in this house to audiences gathered from various quarters, and composed largely of men of business. I preach, too, among those who read the Bible, at least some portions of it sometimes. And to justify an in-

ordinate devotion to professional pursuits, you have furnished yourselves, I am aware, with Scriptures which seem to you very sufficient. You are prompt to remind me of this text—"Not slothful in business," and of this—"If any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith and is worse than an infidel." Well, my brethren, as far as the mere quotations are concerned you are correct; the passages which you recite so earnestly are certainly to be found in the sacred canon. And if to subscribe to these articles, in your interpretation of them, be the faith of a Christian, you assuredly hold fast the form of sound doctrine. If to devote mind and heart to worldly business be religion, you are a pattern of religion. If to toil and scheme, to pass wearisome days and anxious nights that you may provide for your families even when they do not need any provision, that you may bequeath to your children wealth which will probably be a curse to them—if this be piety, you are not "pressing toward the mark," but have reached it; you are not "going on to perfection," you are perfect.

I beg you, however, to remember that, with reference to the first of these passages, you have garbled a command which really enforces the noblest consecration to God, which requires us to be as spiritual in our worldly vocations as in our religious devotions. "*Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.*" This is the precept; and it is intended to teach us that we are to carry religion into our business, to act in secular affairs from spiritual motives, to consult the will of God in all our occupations, and to *serve the Lord* as truly when diligently pursuing our temporal calling as when engaged in acts of worship.

As to the other text which covetousness quotes under the pretense of parental love, what does it teach? In the entire compass of the Scriptures there is not a verse which has been more wantonly and wickedly wrested from its plain meaning. The apostle is speaking of the poor who ought to be sustained by the church; and he says that those who have relations capable of supporting them ought not to be maintained by the church but

by their own kindred ; for if any man provide not for the poor of his own family he has denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel. The passage has nothing to do with amassing fortunes for our children. On the contrary it requires us to employ our means to supply the wants of our indigent relatives ; it enjoins, not accumulation, but a generous liberality.

Upon this point I make every proper concession. A part of the Psalmist's description of a good man is, that "he will guide his affairs with discretion." Let Christians be enterprising merchants, diligent farmers and mechanics, indefatigable lawyers, judges, physicians ; but after all, the great rule of faith is, that the future must ever predominate over the present. "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness," and let earthly things follow as entirely subordinate. Never perhaps did there live a man whose occupations were more diversified than those of Paul. To-day he is traversing the land on long tedious journeys ; to-morrow he is encouraging the crew of a tempest-tossed ship, proving himself the staunchest seaman on board. Now, with canvass and cordage, he is working as a craftsman, making, I have no doubt, the very best tents sold in Corinth either for domestic or military purposes ; and anon he is thundering before kings, and converting cities and nations to the faith. In short, this man seemed to be everywhere, and doing everything ; yet he says, "One thing I do." Amidst all his engagements, one grand object—the glory of God, the cause of Jesus, the good fight of faith—monopolized his thoughts and aims. He was ever busy about eternity, vanquishing difficulties, subduing corruptions, surmounting obstacles, that he might "finish his course with joy." And this is the work for which we are placed in the world ; for this time is given us and all the means and helps we have ; nor are our faith and prayers anything but a sheer delusion, if we contradict them by our conduct. Salvation must be the sublime object of our aspirations and efforts, from which nothing can deter, nothing can divert us, and upon which our hearts must be fixed and concentrated.

But, now, suppose that, instead of this ruling consecration to Christ and the soul, religion is with you only a

secondary thing, a sort of Sunday dress which you are in no danger of wearing out, since you put it off and lay it aside all the week; and that your cares, thoughts, activities are incessantly devoted to earthly things;—what does this prove? It shows either that you are not a Christian or that your soul is utterly secularized. Yours is the very condition in which the text declares that almost all will be fatally surprised. Read the parable of the rich fool. What was his ruin? He was engaged in agriculture, the primitive occupation of man in Eden. It is not hinted that he was dishonorable or sordid; and were he living at this day, he might be an honored member of any of our churches, a deacon, even a pastor. What then was his sin? He spent his days in “laying up treasure upon earth, and was not rich toward God.” He did not habitually live with reference to eternity. “Where your treasure is there will your heart be also;” his wealth was plainly upon earth, for his affections were all there.

And lawful things become criminal when they acquire such excessive influence over us that our hearts cling chiefly to them for the sensuous gratifications they supply. As I have shewn you in another discourse, this was the guilt of Dives in the parable. We turn aside the edge of the Saviour’s warning by regarding him as a debauched and cruel glutton. Jesus, however, intimates nothing of the kind. He was rich; if that was a sin, why then you are scheming and laboring day and night to be the greatest sinners upon earth. “He was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day;” that is to say, he lived in a style which his wealth and position authorized; so lived Job, so lived David, and so live thousands who are justly respected for sincere piety. But his cruelty to Lazarus. Not at all. In the East it is a proof of great benevolence, if a nobleman permits beggars to sit upon the steps of his palace and receive alms from his visitors.* When he lifted up his eyes in hell, there was no charge of vice or cruelty. The voice from heaven reminded him only that he had

*See Page 55 in First Series.

“had his good things in this life ;” this was his ruin—a life of worldliness, ease, self indulgence.

The appetites and affections are powerfully moved through the avenues of the senses. When objects are visibly present they make such an impression that the holiest man cannot help seeing them, and the world sees nothing else. We cannot put them away while they are before us; and when removed, their ideas still remain, and imagination often renders the memory of a pleasure more dangerous than the pleasure itself. The objects of faith, never having been seen, exert no such potency, and leave no images in the heart. Hence the necessity that we should be ever “looking at the things unseen and eternal.” By fixing upon them the earnest eye of faith, hope, love, longing desire, we shall preserve their ascendancy over our souls; but the moment we remit this communion with eternity, sensible things recover their pernicious supremacy. “All that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father, but of the world;” these words are full of instruction. They declare that the pleasures, the desires, the honors of life are innocent when kept in proper subordination; but that as soon as they engross our affections, their nature is altogether changed; they become “*lusts*”—“fleshly lusts which war against the soul,” and as to which we are admonished that “if we live after the flesh we shall die.”

II. You see, then, when lawful things become sins and snares through the improper and inordinate use of them. But, upon a subject of such moment we must not be satisfied with remarks so general, we ought to enter our own bosoms and examine ourselves. And, for this purpose, I submit to you the following practical tests, commending them to every man’s conscience in the sight of God.

First, then, if you would know whether lawful things have gained a criminal ascendancy over you, examine whether you are daily watching, praying, contending against their influence. Every Christian virtue supposes and requires such a conflict. It is essential to love

for God,—“if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him;” and to faith “this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.” And so of other graces.

I go farther and affirm that the sins most disastrous to those who profess to be, and who are pious, shew the necessity of such unceasing combat against the usurpations of lawful objects. For, let any one carefully study the human heart, and enquire how it is that real Christians so often violate their vows, fall into gross inconsistencies, pierce themselves through with many sorrows, perhaps dishonor a cause dearer to them than life,—and he will find that these falls scarcely ever proceed from insincerity or a want of good faith and holy purposes, but are almost always the disorders introduced by some passion which the more easily besets us because it is in itself proper, and which, through the peculiar temperament of a Christian, or the circumstances in which he is placed, has acquired a fatal dominion over him. In his artful attacks upon Jesus, the devil addressed himself to those appetites and passions which are natural to humanity; and it is through feelings, sentiments, desires proper in themselves, but ever seeking to usurp an improper sway over us, that he is constantly attempting to betray us into sin. Woe to us if we are not ever on our guard against temptations which every day lie in ambuscade all around us. We must “bring under our bodies and keep them in subjection,” or the interests, pursuits, gratifications of the world will bring us under, and keep us in subjection, and sap the very foundations of our spirituality and holiness.

If you would ascertain whether lawful things are exposing your souls to danger, examine whether you are in reality expecting your chief happiness from them, either in the way of success in business, or in carnal gratification. “Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world.” He had not abandoned Christ; he would probably have abhorred the thought of apostasy; but secular things had gradually wound themselves about his heart, so that the joy which he once shared

with Paul in the service of the Redeemer* had been displaced by an eager devotion to the world. "My son, give me thy heart;"—there is the oblation which the Christian must daily offer to God. The "many" are saying "who will shew us any good? Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us; thou hast put gladness in my heart more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased;"—there is the difference between the reigning desires of the children of heaven, and of the votaries of this world.

The admonition against the "*abuse*" of the world contains a distinct admission that the "*use*" of it is proper. Indeed, "the world," that is, the Christian enjoyment of it, is enumerated as one of the "*all things*" which are ours. God gives us temporal blessings "richly to enjoy;" but to set our affections upon any earthly objects so as to make them essential to our highest happiness, this is at once a mistake and a sin. An impatient restlessness to possess them; a pining after them as if they were our life, in the temper of Rachel when she exclaimed, "Give me children, or I die;"—this shews clearly that our hearts are given up to idolatry; and unless mercifully withheld, such objects will cause our souls to come to grief, and to sad experience. Jesus says, "Deny thyself, and follow me." These inordinate passions say, "Disobey Jesus, and gratify us." And if we expect our highest happiness from them, it is not difficult to know whom we shall obey. The heart will not continue faithful, nay, it is already faithless, if Jesus is not its chief delight; and earthly rivals will usurp and hold the throne which belongs only to God.

A third criterion by which we may determine whether lawful things are disastrous to the welfare of our souls, is found in the secret turn and bent of our thoughts when God is visiting us with afflictions that he may wean us from the world. If Jesus reigns within, our hearts will then instinctively fly to him as their centre, portion and resting-place. But if under chastisement our thoughts are going after the world and its transient con-

*See Colossians iv. 14, and Philemon 24.

cerns and sensuous gratifications, the symptom is ominous, portentous.

What a course of moral study, what comprehensive spiritual casuistry is folded up in that summary as to the duties and relations of life which is prescribed by the apostle, after he had decided the cases of conscience proposed by the Corinthians. He sends them, indeed, minute directions; but he tells them that if they would only cherish habitually a proper conception of the brevity of our present existence and the illusiveness of earthly things, they would need no advice as to that holy deadness to the world which becomes a Christian. "But this I say, brethren, that the time is short; it remaineth that both they that have wives be as though they had none; and they that weep as though they wept not; and they that rejoice as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy as though they possessed not; and they that use the world as not abusing it; for the fashion of this world passeth away." This settled weanedness, is, however, not even comprehended by us until our hearts have been touched and chastened by affliction, until sorrow makes things real and earnest, until our eyes are washed by tears to see objects in their true lights. And this is the very design of God when he corrects us.

But now suppose that while he is thus seeking to draw us off from things seen and temporal, and to bring us under the influence of things unseen and eternal, we are still saying with Lot, "Oh, not so my Lord"—not so fast, not so far. It is said of Lot that, "When he lingered, the men took hold of him and hastened him, the Lord being merciful to him." Well, suppose that, even after our afflictions have, as with angel hands, led us away from the objects of our idolatry, we resemble Lot's wife, to whom the context refers, and continue still to cast longing, lingering looks backwards; that we make pleas and pretexts for our daily passions; that our feelings rise up in mutiny; that we say, "Ye have taken away my gods, and what have I more?"—why, here is most melancholy proof of a criminal attachment to carnal interests and joys which will either be fatal to our salvation, or must draw down upon us severer chastisements, so that

our consciences can no longer be silenced, and our hearts shall ascend to God and find in him their supreme felicity, the source of all happiness, even when that happiness seems to come from his creatures.

I had intended to indicate other marks by which we ought to search ourselves, but it is unnecessary; for one reflection comprehends all I could say. My brethren, surely a being composed of two natures, one mean, the other spiritual and noble; a being to whom are proposed two classes of interests, one groveling and perishing, the other celestial and immortal;—surely, whenever these natures and interests conflict, such a being ought not to hesitate a moment as to his preference.

Now, such exactly is our condition; and what shall we say of a man who habitually overlooks his soul, his highest interests, and lives for the body and the earth? As far as our spiritual welfare permits, we are right in seeking to promote our temporal welfare. They are ignorant alike of man's constitution and the religion of Jesus, who insist that our natural propensities and passions are to be extirpated;—an error this however which I need not expose, for it certainly makes no converts among you. But to fix all our attention upon the objects which favor these propensities and passions, to be always earnestly enquiring,—not how we may rise above this material frame, with its disorders, and nourish and elevate the never-dying principle;—but what shall we eat? what shall we drink? wherewith shall we be clothed? how may we amass money? how secure the gratification of the senses? how consult a piece of organized clay?—when I reflect upon this perversion and degradation of our humanity, this shameful exhibition of stupidity, folly, sin, I comprehend the earnestness and solemnity with which Jesus again and again warns us upon this point. This degeneracy is so universal that it does not shock us, just as in a lunatic asylum the inmates do not notice the insanity of each other; but everything—the senses, the mind, the heart, the imagination—everything is in moral disorder, when a being like man can give the main strength of his feelings to the love of money, or of sensual gratification; when a spiritual being is living for the

body; when an immortal being is engrossed by the pursuits, interests, profits, pleasures of this earth, as if they were his real satisfying portion.

III. Our remaining topic has referencè to the guilt and danger of a life in which lawful objects exercise over us this inordinate and absorbing power. At first, indeed, we do not see anything so very criminal in being thus occupied. "They did eat, they drank, they married, they were given in marriage, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded." Well, why not? what harm in all this? "Why not? what harm?"—But could we ask these questions were we not most deplorably fallen and blinded?

O, consider such a life in the light of the Gospel and of the grand truths which the Gospel reveals; the wonders of redemption; the means which God is now employing to diffuse the blessings of salvation over the earth, and to bring these blessings home to our own children and families; the sublime duties and conflicts to which the Gospel calls us; and the magnificent promises which it unfolds. Here are subjects the contemplation of which engages the spirits in heaven; things into which the angels desire to look, and which are infinitely more interesting to us than to angels. Represent to yourselves a man for whom all these riches of grace and glory have been prepared, to whom all these glorious mysteries and certainties are proposed—represent to yourselves such a man utterly insensible to their inspirations, never giving one thought to these great objects, but living as if there were no Gospel, no salvation, no heaven, no eternity; eating, drinking, buying, selling, planting, building.

And consider such a life in the light of a dying hour. To die the Christian's death, we must live the Christian's life; and upon this article you at least who attend my ministry cannot deceive yourselves. You know that we are saved through faith. But you also know that saving faith is not an opinion, not the mere assent to an orthodox creed; that it is such a reception of the Gospel as binds all our souls in loyalty to Jesus. It is to the theology of Paul we turn whenever we wish to rejoice in the

noblest exhibitions of the doctrines of grace. When, however, that apostle is about to die, what is the evidence of his piety, for which he glorifies God? Does he say, I have been evangelical in my opinions; I have entertained and defended certain articles of religion? No, he exclaims, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." In that solemn, searching, stripping hour, what ground of assurance, of reasonable hope, will you be able to find as you look back upon a life during the whole of which you have been driving hard after the world, pressing forward among the most eager devotees of the senses and passions?

In every view, a life entirely given to secular things is a plain, downright open contempt of the things disclosed in the Gospel. This is not all. Such a life opposes and defeats the very design of the religion of Jesus.

My beloved brethren, once for all, if it be possible, let us understand the religion we profess. I say, if it be possible, because we all seem resolved to misconstrue the teachings of the Bible as to the character of a true disciple of Christ. We have this character clearly described in these pages, but every one follows his own notions.—With one, to be a Christian is to contend for certain abstract doctrines and dogmas. With another, the Gospel is all grace and mercy; he is confident of salvation, tho' swallowed up in selfish cares and indulgences. While a third—the representative of the great mass of professed Christians—thinks that he can be a follower of Jesus, and live as if there were no cross, no self-denial, no crucifixion to the world, and that at the last moment, when he can no longer hold on to the earth, it will be time enough to lift his eyes to heaven.

However, the more closely we study the Scriptures, the more clearly do we perceive that he only is a Christian who feels himself a stranger and a pilgrim upon the earth; and that the very purpose of the Gospel is to produce in us a holy deadness to this present world, and a growing attachment to the world which faith reveals. Indeed, what does God intend by placing us here under such an economy? Does he mean to make us happy? But can the soul find its felicity in these abodes of vanity,

where all things are disproportioned to its capacities and mock its deepest wants? where the fairest flowers never come to fruit, and need only be gathered to wither in our hands? What then? Does God wish us to be unhappy? Perish a thought so injurious to his love, his wisdom, his mercy. There is but one solution of the problem. Our existence here is a state of probation in which we are to choose between objects of sense, and of faith, between the soul and the world, between "things seen and temporal" and "things unseen and eternal." A Christian lives in view of eternity. In his practical estimate everything here is contemptible when compared with eternity. "Yonder I shall be satisfied," he says, "Yonder I shall mingle with congenial spirits and enter upon that existence for which my soul yearns." But if this be so, what is the character of him who, instead of reaching after that grand futurity which alone makes man great, spends his years in a succession of cares, desires, hopes, anxieties, all terminating in this poor diminutive sphere of vanity and sin.

Lastly, meditate upon the declaration of the Sacred Oracles as to the victory over the world which faith achieves in the heart of every believer. "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world, and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?"

Now, what is the *world* to which this passage alludes? Is it the world of covetousness, voluptuousness, licentiousness? By no means. It does not require the exercise of faith to make us superior to these low vices. It is of the dominion of worldliness the apostle speaks. He refers, not to passions criminal in themselves, but to that eagerness for present gratification which, like Esau, sacrifices future inestimable blessings for a present pleasure; and this—not because we place a higher value upon the indulgence (for Esau did not compare the savory morsel with his birthright)—but because the mess of pottage satisfies the cravings of an importunate appetite. The victory of faith is the renunciation of every gain and pleasure inconsistent with the will of God.

To live after the flesh, to debase all the glorious attributes of the mind to objects which appeal to the senses, this is to starve the soul now, and to damn it in eternity. "He is dead, died on Wednesday." "What did he live for?" "For the world; and he gained the world; he amassed wealth; he bequeathed a large fortune to his children, and is dead; died on Wednesday"—My God, what a life for a Christian, a disciple of Jesus!

It is the tyranny of the *Present*, of the *Now*, of the *Sensuous* (the proper word is *Sensual*, but so degenerate is man, so universally and constantly do the senses minister to the depravities of our nature, that "sensual" has got to mean "vicious," and we have had to make a new word), it is this tyranny which the apostle designates when he speaks of "the world." And now, weigh well his remarkable language. "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world." The very work of the Holy Spirit in regeneration is so to change the heart, that its warmest affections, its strongest desires, its highest hopes, the sources of its truest joys are all new, spiritual, elevated above the tastes and passions of the earth. "Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" For, in the example of this adorable Being what a model of entire superiority to that love of distinction, of selfish gratification, of power, of money which are the ruling passions of men. In his doctrines earthly things are comparatively insignificant, our spiritual interests alone have real worth and greatness. Above all, the atonement, the dignity which that amazing sacrifice sheds upon the soul, the honor it confers on man; the glory and immortality to which it raises him;—with these sublime truths, these transporting prospects before him, the child of God, the heir of heaven cannot surrender his heart to the empire of carnal objects; as he surveys the astonishing spectacle on Calvary, he exclaims, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified to me, and I unto the world."

But, I must draw these remarks to a close. Men and brethren, the subject upon which I have addressed you

this morning is of universal application. We all carry within us the dispositions and passions against which we are admonished in the text. Surrounded by objects which constantly tempt us to inordinate attachments, we all have need to be perpetually on our guard that we may hold our affections properly disengaged from them. But, alas, it is because this discourse is applicable to all, that I fear it will influence none; especially when it addresses you upon the duty of detachment from the profits, pleasures, cares of the world.

To-day, some ten, twenty, forty thousand pulpits are haranguing audiences as to the brevity and uncertainty of human life, the vanity of riches, the unspeakable folly and danger of spending time in pursuits which wrong and mock our spirituality and immortality. What will be the effect of these sermons and exhortations? As soon hope to cure a chronic disease by dissertations and homilies. The Eastern fable tells us of a magical ointment which, applied to one eye, causes all nature to be dressed in a thousand charming hues; but if both eyes are anointed, the illusion vanishes and everything is seen in its true color. If we except one or two here and there whose vision has been cleared to look upon things as they will really appear in a dying hour, all are under a hallucination as to the world from which we strive in vain to disenchant them. Upon the great mass of men is the spell of a witchcraft which cheats, entrances the reason; and the wizard's touch holds even the professed people of God fascinated, dazzled by deceitful apparitions which no mortal power can dissolve. Vainly do we warn them against the love of the world and the things that are in the world; a fatal infatuation beguiles them. They admit all we urge; but each one draws for himself a line between the proper and the criminal pursuit of the world; and so draws it as to condemn others, and to spare his own darling attachments.

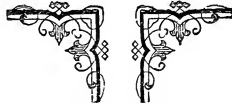
Was not Noah "a preacher of righteousness?" And with the sound of the coming deluge in his ears, what rousing appeals he must have uttered. Was not Lot a preacher? Did he not implore, and conjure, and vex

his righteous soul, and stir up all his might to impress men with a sense of their danger? What influence did those sermons exert? The text informs you. "They did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded, they were married and given in marriage."

And it is too manifest that this very engrossing power of lawful things is now defeating all our ministry. In the parable of the sower Jesus declares that "the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word and it becometh unfruitful." My brethren, my friends, let this no longer be. It is not great sins which cause me to tremble for you; it is the earthly, supine, careless spirit which respects yet neglects the great salvation; not the dissipations of vice, but the far more fatal dissipations of business,—of cares, anxieties which absorb your thoughts day by day—which, year after year keep you seeking to amass wealth, until death shall surprise you and the wrath of God be amassed upon your souls forever. It is this excessive engrossment which causes so many of you to put off the vast concern of salvation for "a convenient season." And this procrastinating temper is not confined to the world. Thousands in the church are thus deferring the great duty of living as they know they ought to live, and as they mean to live before they die.

Let us no longer suffer this treacherous delusion to steal away our reason, to hide from us the things it most deeply concerns us to see, to keep out of view the objects of faith, while those of sense flatter and seduce us. If the admonitions to which you have this day listened be founded in truth, respect them. Sacrifice the present to the future, things seen and temporal, for things unseen and eternal. Let this subject shed a new light on the experience of those who are Christ's. You often complain of darkness and doubts; how can it be otherwise? When you spend your hours rushing in headlong voracity after the world, how can you know spiritual joy and assurance? Be Christians on principle. We are born with inordinate propensities to carnal objects. As we grow up, these propensities become strong, violent attach-

ments, producing disorders in our senses, our passions, our imaginations which, by prayer, faith, the succors of the Holy Spirit, we must be daily subduing, or they will subvert all spiritual vitality in our souls. "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness,"—this is the great law of the religion of Jesus; and there can be no religious enjoyment now, no safety for eternity, until we obey this law;—living for heaven, and leaving all earthly things to come afterwards as comparatively unnecessary and insignificant.



Sermon Third.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD COMETH NOT WITH OBSERVATION.

“THE kingdom of God cometh not with observation.”—LUKE xvii : 20.

EVERYWHERE we find this difference between litness and greatness, that the former is loud and noisy, while the latter is calm and quiet; the most potent forces being ever deep and still—the silent rays of the sun, according to the fable, achieving what defied all the tumult and bluster of the storm. When we compare our works with the works of God, this contrast is most striking.—We can do nothing without a flourish of trumpets; without seeking to attract attention by pomp, pageantry, ostentation; but how silently God performs his glorious operations. The sun shines; the starry canopy glows with radiant urns of light; the seasons revolve—winter, spring, summer, autumn, with their beneficent ministries; planets, worlds, constellations burn along their orbits; and all how mutely, how unobtrusively.

The passage I have read declares that, in the kingdom of God—the Gospel dispensation—there is the same absence of all display and parade. I offer you one or two thoughts in illustration of this great truth.

I. And, first, I remark, that the kingdom of God was not ushered in with pomp and splendor; so the Saviour’s language may be and has been translated.

In uttering the text, Jesus intended to correct the universal error of the Jews as to the Messiah and his glory.

No anticipations could have been more magnificent than those they cherished as to this august deliverer and his illustrious victories; and a long train of venerable prophecies converged upon that period of the world's history, as "the fullness of the time" when he should appear.

Hence the question of the Pharisees, and the Saviour's answer. "And when he was demanded of the Pharisees when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation. Neither shall they say, Lo here! or Lo there! for behold the kingdom of God is within you."—Very remarkable words these, whether we consider the persons addressed or the speaker himself.

Expectation was now on tiptoe. Shiloh was about to appear, and with imperial sway to establish his empire, breaking the Roman yoke, and exalting his chosen people to sovereignty over the whole world. I need not tell you how this cherished traditional pride of the nation would rise up in revolt against a Messiah invested with no earthly glory, and coming with no display nor demonstration.

And the speaker, what, who was he? In any view of his character, the announcement he here makes is astonishing. For if he was the Messiah, all the dearest hopes of Israel were miserably disappointed. If he was only an obscure Hebrew youth, whence had he this knowledge, this conception of a kingdom wholly spiritual, and which, even at this day, most professed Christians are incapable of comprehending?

My brethren, how entirely the kingdom of Christ was founded without any of the parade, pomp and circumstance expected by the Jews, you all know. The king himself made his entrance, not as the nation anticipated, nor as we would have predicted. No heralds announce his approach, no imposing retinue form his escort. While the Jews are looking for signs—for visible tokens and prognostications—lo, at midnight, in an obscure village, a most unnoticeable every-day thing occurs, "a child is born." All heaven is in commotion at that birth; and, in brilliant files, angels and archangels rush down to Bethlehem, shaking celestial radiance from their wings,

shedding choral harmonies from their lyres; but there is no stir upon earth. Not in the day, when all was noise and tumult, but when the heart of the busy world was asleep, when nature was hushed in solemn repose, and only silent stars kept watch like sentinels; not in a time of war, when the souls of men were ready to hail a martial chieftain, but in a period of universal peace; not in the capital, but in a sequestered hamlet, far away from the haunts and observation of men;—then, there, he was manifested; and so manifested, so humbly and softly; with no awful presence, with no regal state and equipage; but the incarnation of gentleness and meekness; an infant nestling in the bosom of a lowly maiden. Only a few rustic shepherds knew that the King had come—just as now only a few simple wakeful souls feel his approach. Pharisees with their sanctities, scribes with their learning, the very priests ministering at the altar, were ignorant of this amazing phenomenon. No crowds thronged to welcome the Redeemer; no acclamations greeted the Prince of Peace. He came as “a root out of a dry ground, having no form nor comeliness;” with nothing to distinguish him from any other poor child, unless it were deeper abasement, poorer parentage, and meaner accommodation.

And as was his advent, so were his life, death, resurrection, and ascension. Compared with these events all the records of heroes and kings, all revolutions, the fall and rise of states and empires, are turned into contempt; yet, at the time, they attracted little notice from mankind.

I said his life; for you all know how unostentatiously he lived and moved among men; his only title “the Son of Man;” his escort a few obscure companions, chosen from that class of society which, even in this country, is disdainfully styled “the lower order.” His discourses—those truths which were to regenerate and bless the earth—were delivered without any pretension, generally to a few, sometimes in conversation with a single listener. Calmly, gently, his looks, tones, words fell into men’s hearts. His doctrine dropped as the rain, his speech distilled as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender

herb, as the showers upon the grass. And while working such physical miracles; giving sight to the blind, health to the sick, life to the dead; and while blessing the earth with nobler miracles, shedding life and light and joy into crushed hearts and perishing souls;—still that prophecy was even fulfilled. “He shall not strive nor cry, neither shall his voice be heard in the streets. A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench.” Never was there such a triumphal procession as his, while moving among the children of men. It was the march of Love over the ruins of sin and misery; but no incense, no pæans announced his progress. Never upon earth had there been such displays of godlike mercy and power, but so little did they reveal him to a blind world, that, to the last, he could say, “Blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me.”

As his life so was his death. The crucifixion was the most sublime and awful tragedy of which the universe had ever been, or ever will be the theatre. It absorbed the admiring gaze of cherub and seraph. Upon that stupendous spectacle—that altar and that victim—the regards of the High and Holy Majesty of heaven were concentrated with ineffable intensity; and while eternity endures, the wondrous deed of love will exhaust the adorations of glorified spirits. But the scene on Calvary kindled no hosannas in human hearts. “He was led as a lamb to the slaughter.” He bore his cross to the place of execution, and was nailed to it, like any common malefactor; and expired amidst the scoffs and blasphemies of the rabble. Nor did his resurrection and ascension attract the attention of men. Early, before the first grey of the morning, the Conqueror calmly arose, and—folding his death-garments away at the head of the grave—he stepped forth, unseen by mortal eyes, and stood alone beside the sepulchre, “The Resurrection and the Life.” And as noiselessly he left the earth. Leading his apostles to a sequestered spot, he turned to them, and, lifting his hands, he blessed them; and, while blessing them, he ascended, and a cloud received him out of their sight.

“The kingdom of God cometh not” (it was not ushered in) “with observation.” Silently the King approached, and entered our ruined world on his mission of love. And—while other revolutions, are introduced with tumults and convulsions, with the stern magnificent array of battle—he, the holiest among the mighty, and the mightiest among the holy, without fleets or armies, without conflicts or violence, founded an empire which has already changed the face of a hemisphere, and shall one day regenerate this entire planet. “Every battle of the warrior is with confused noise and garments rolled in blood; but this shall be with burning and fuel of fire. For unto us a child is born; unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.”

II. I pass, now, to a second illustration of the truth in the text; and observe that “the kingdom of God” is not extended with observation.

The Christian world is looking and longing for the more perfect coming of this kingdom; but—while condemning the low material conceptions of the Messiah which the Jews cherished—the professed disciples of Jesus are everywhere repeating the same superstitious delusion. This is, in fact, the mechanical age of the world. Whatever people want to do now, they make a machine to do it with; and this idea has got into the churches, so that religion is in danger of becoming mechanical in head and heart. Everywhere there is a monomania for all sorts of pious machinery; for meetings, anniversaries, committees, societies, exhibitions, institutions, constitutions, newspaper puffing, public collections, as the only engines for the advancement of the Gospel. The warning in our text is too often overlooked; and good men are ever seeking to carry forward the enterprises of salvation by “observation”—by visible pomp and show—by crying “Lo here! and Lo there!” External ecclesiastical organizations; publicity and parade in religious operations; a certain eclat and

pageantry in services and ceremonies; architectural splendor in edifices of worship; imposing arts and efforts of oratory; the noise and stir of popular excitement;—it is by such aids and contrivances, that multitudes are hoping to secure the triumphs of the Cross.

Now all this, if not a sin, is a great mistake. The kingdom of God is within you. The Greek word has been properly translated “within;” for that it is an interior, invisible kingdom, is the reason assigned by Jesus, why it is unaccompanied with external demonstration. By this reproof the Saviour virtually declared, that the kingdom of God is spiritual; that it consists absolutely in nothing exterior; so that even his own personal presence in the midst of the people, could be of no sort of avail, unless he was revealed in them. He did not mean to say that this kingdom was in the hearts of the Pharisees whom he addressed; for he expressly rebukes their entire ignorance of its very nature. His admonition is an aphorism of universal application; a form of speech common to all languages; and expressing the general axiom, that the kingdom must be and always is “within.” He condemns the superstitious anticipations of a glorious outward manifestation of this kingdom; and—withdrawing it from the visible and perishable—he transfers it to the invisible and eternal. The glory of God’s kingdom is in the hidden spiritual life of Christians; in their purity, their works, their graces. But now, need I tell you, that religious pomp, noise, parade do not foster this life, are, in fact, often fatal to it?

The kingdom of God is the kingdom of truth; this is the sublime announcement which Jesus proclaimed in his interview with Pilate. Though deeply impressed by the dignity of his presence, the Roman governor, accustomed to see royalty invested with the trappings of power, was unable to comprehend the supremacy which the Redeemer asserted for himself. “Art thou a king then?” he exclaims—Thou,—thus dishonored and despised—art thou a king? “Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am, a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness of the truth.” The insignia of his regal power were not

tinsel prestige and splendor,—a throne—a sceptre—a strip of velvet sprinkled with gems. His was the imperial majesty of truth; by the power of truth he would reign in the minds of men. And this is the power by which his empire is now to be extended. Truth living in the heart, and testified in the life,—this is the agency by which the cause of God is to vanquish all opposition.

Yes, the kingdom of Jesus is the kingdom of truth; but it is noiselessly that truth wins its way. By deep patient thought it expands its empire, but thought is ever silent, its power is moral not material. The only victories which exert any permanent influence, are those achieved by truth. These continue to bless the earth, while heroes and their deeds of renown “pass away like the whirlwind;” but no sonorous metal, no clang of arms, no martial pomp and parade mark these triumphs.

Brethren, we do not want external pomp, imposing mechanism; nor do we want loud polemical controversies and clamors about theology. What we need is, witnesses to the truth, characters into which truth is received in its purity, and from which truth is reflected as from a mirror. The great necessity of the church and the world is, true men; men true to truth, to Christ, to themselves; men loving the truth, exemplifying the truth. There is a kingly authority in such Christians; they are the lineal apostolic successors, the real heaven-anointed priests, the true heaven-ordained prophets of the Cross, clothed with a power far more sublime and resistless than the gifts of tongues and of miracles.

The kingdom of God is not extended with observation, because its triumphs are achieved, “not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord.”

Even when the Saviour and the Apostles wrought such wonderful works, those miracles themselves converted nobody. There is something very pathetic in that exclamation, “All day long have I stretched out my hands to a disobedient and gainsaying people.” It is the Redeemer’s complaint of his little success among the Jews. And, when I consider his character and life, the truths which he uttered, the miraculous attestations to his

mission, his exclusive devotion to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and the adaptation of his doctrines to the masses of the people, I confess it seems to me nearly incredible that the ministry of Jesus should thus have been almost a failure. The explanation is found in the fact, that the Holy Spirit had not fully come. No sooner had this glorious Paraclete commenced his dispensation, than we behold the inauguration of a new era ; we see three thousand souls converted in a few moments, under the simplest preaching of the Cross.

I am very anxious, my friends, to impress this truth upon you. I wish you would study the rise and first wonderful spread of the Gospel ; that you would observe how, without tumult or mechanism, but by a deep spiritual power, its light and life pervaded the world. No machinery—not all the material force of fleets and armies—can subdue the pride of man's heart, or bend a single thought of man's mind. Our spirits can be bowed only before the mysterious potency of the Holy Spirit. It is all important that you should be often reminded of this great doctrine ; for we are in danger of forgetting it ; we are prone to cry, "Lo here, Lo there,"—to fix our observation upon means or instruments, and not to look directly to those supernatural aids, without which we can do nothing. Nor is it difficult to detect the causes of this fatal illusion.

What is visible strikes the eye ; but the agency of the Holy Spirit is hidden and inscrutable. "The world cannot receive him," says Jesus, "because it seeth him not;" and, for the same reason, Christians do not recognize and honor him. A single "spark of our own kindling," any "strange fire" excites us more vividly, than the sacred mysterious flame, in which our souls must be baptized. Hence, so many admit the agency of the Spirit, while so few have any practical persuasion of it. This is not all. These celestial aids are not forces which we can arrange and regulate in our distribution of instrumentalities. We are to work as if there were no such succors ; and, therefore, we do not realize our absolute dependence on them.

My brethren, we must correct this error; and, to correct it, we have only to open the Sacred Volume, on every page of which, we find the necessity of the Spirit's influence proclaimed as emphatically as that of the atonement by the blood of Christ. Are the desolations of Zion to be repaired? It must be the work of the Spirit: "Upon the land of my people shall come up thorns and briars, yea upon all the houses of joy in the joyous city; because the palaces shall be forsaken; the multitude of the city shall be left; the forts and towers shall be for dens forever, a joy of wild asses, a pasture of flocks; until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness shall be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest." Are men to be convicted of their sins, and to repent of them? It must be the work of the Holy Spirit. "And I will pour upon the house of David and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplication; and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him as one that is in bitterness for his first born." Zerrubbabel—the type of Jesus—shall reconstruct the temple—the emblem of that mystical building which God is raising in the midst of the world; but how shall the great and arduous undertaking be accomplished? "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord." The brightness of the Father's glory is found in fashion as a man, and is thus put into mysterious communication with our humanity; but he must be consecrated and equipped for his enterprise by the descent of the Spirit upon him. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised; to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." The Apostles had been taught by Jesus himself, and educated as the future lights of the world; they were endowed, too, with miraculous powers. Yet they remained impotent for the conversion of men, until they were endued with power by the Spirit. Till then, they were warned to attempt nothing. The

Saviour "commanded, that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which ye have heard of me. For John baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit, not many days hence." "*Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you.*" In short, these first preachers of the Gospel expected to triumph, simply because they were "strong in the grace which is in Jesus Christ," because "Christ crucified is the wisdom of God, and the power of God." Their success is always ascribed directly to the "hand of the Lord which was with them." From first to last, from the day of Pentecost to the final chapter of the inspired record, we read not one word about the learning, eloquence, power of these glorious evangelists. The bitterest persecutors—Jews and Gentiles, priests, nobles, high and low, rich and poor—were turned to the Lord. Whole cities and nations were obedient to the faith. What preachers were these; what arguments, what discourses, what resistless efficacy in their appeals. Wonderful, in Greece and Rome, had been the might of those consummate orators, whose thunders appalled the guilty, roused the slumbering spirit of states and senates, and marshaled armies against invading tyrants; but those master-pieces were only splendid failures—or rather puerile imbecilities, when we compare their influence with the potency of the Gospel proclaimed by the first heralds of salvation. To these heralds, however, none of this power is ever ascribed. They, themselves, constantly declare, that in humility, in "weakness and fear and much trembling" they declared their message; that, of themselves, they could do nothing; that Paul might plant, and Apollos water, but God alone could give the increase.

My beloved brethren, enter into these truths. I believe that the churches are now grieving the Holy Spirit by forgetting their dependence upon his interposition. Let us not be guilty of this sin. To effect that transformation for which this earth waits and groans, vain, vain, are all human agencies and ministries—vain all means, though of divine appointment, without a special divine agency. Those professed Christians who deny the per-

sonality and deity of the Holy Spirit act consistently, when they refuse to enlist in the cause of foreign missions, or in any enterprise which seeks to change the hearts of men. Look around, and you will see that, wherever this heresy gains ground, all zeal for the conversion of the world at once ceases; men feeling the task to be hopeless. And we, whose creed acknowledges this heavenly Agent, but whose conduct too often denies and insults him, are sometimes left to experience the penalty of this sin, to learn most painfully, by defeat, how abortive are all our most devoted exertions, unless enforced by a power transcendentally above us; and are always compelled to confess, even when we succeed, that humility and grateful adoration are the only tempers which become us. Let us remember that any triumph—how much more the universal triumph of the Gospel—is an achievement to which all externalisms are plainly disproportionate; that to expect success through any human expedients, any arms or contrivances of men, is to forsake God while professing to honor him. “Thus saith the Lord; cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord. For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited.” Let us habitually confess our utter helplessness; and implore the aids of the Spirit, who works secretly, mysteriously, but with immortal energy. Let our constant, fervent, importunate supplication be that of the church. “Awake, awake, put on thy strength, O arm of the Lord; awake as in the ancient days, in the generations of old. O, thou that dwellest between the cherubims, shine forth; stir up thy strength and come and save us. It is time for thee, Lord, to work, for they have made void thy law. Return, O Lord, how long? and let it repent thee concerning thy servants; O satisfy us early with thy mercy, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days. Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children. And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us; and establish thou the work of our hands upon us, yea, the work of our hands establish thou it.”

But the kingdom of God cometh not—is not extended—with observation, for another reason ; because the true elements of its power are not those splendid gifts and accomplishments which men admire, but those graces which, unhonored, unnoticed by men, are loved and honored by God.

You require no argument to prove that the distinction I have just made really exists ; that—as the earth is fertilized, not by the roaring torrent and cataract, but by the soft rain and gentle dews,—so the Christian who is enriched by heaven with the choicest endowments may make no noise in the world, and very little in the church. On this point judge for yourselves. I put a question to each of you, give me your answer. Tell me, what is the most perfect Christian character you can conceive ? What ? you all reply, why it is the character in which all the graces of the Gospel are combined ; a faith which overcomes the world, and lives in communion with heaven ; a humility which abases itself before God ; a purity which abhors the thought of sin ; a charity which seeks not its own, but makes disinterested sacrifices for others ; a love which ever prefers the will of God ; in short, integrity, forgiveness, gentleness, meekness. He whose character is adorned with these graces, he, I hear you all say, is the most perfect Christian, he exemplifies most of the spirit of Jesus. Very well ; you are correct in the estimate ; for it was these traits which exalted Abraham to the pre-eminent glory of being the friend of God and the father and model of the faithful. But, now, need I tell you, that such a man will attract no observation ; that he will seem to be common because he is simple and true, always doing right, always in harmony with God. Such a Christian is, in fact, unconscious of anything in himself which deserves notice. Any such consciousness would destroy his greatness. His soul, his life shines by communion with God, but, like Moses, he “wists not of it,” To mortal eyes he presents none of the lineaments and powers of a great man, he is only a good man, a very commonplace person, with nothing shining to distinguish him from the commonplace people around him.

And yet Christians of this stamp are the greatest blessings, the richest treasures to the church. They have received from God an ampler commission for usefulness than is vouchsafed to other mortals, even to those of the most brilliant genius. They are the salt of the earth, and a few of them, scattered through a community, exert a resistless though silent influence. I know that God employs noble endowments for the propagation of his truth; and happy they who consecrate to this glorious work splendid intellects, an affluence of knowledge and wisdom. But a workman chooses instruments best suited to his work; and you know the selection which God makes. "Ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called; but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are."

Those who hear me know how cordially I sympathize with all the active enterprises around us for the spread of the Gospel, and how sincerely I rejoice in their prosperity. I go farther. I cannot comprehend how any one can have the spirit of Jesus and not identify himself, heart and hand, with these movements. But, after all, no matter what a man's zeal in these services, he will do nothing for the cause of Christ, unless his character exhibit the virtues of the Gospel, and his demonstrations be a testimony of the power of the kingdom of God within him. If his life be unholy, of what avail is all the noise and show he can make in religious societies, in the Sabbath school, in the pulpit, on the platform? His advocacy will only damage the cause for which he pleads so earnestly. No, no, it is the silent eloquence of a holy life, which is the source of living, commanding energy in the cause of the Redeemer. It is holiness in the heart, which is the secret of spiritual power. By a law as universal as our instincts of right and wrong, it is certain, that no man, whatever be his genius, can acquire influence as a

Christian advocate, unless his reputation for piety is unblemished; nor will he long retain such a reputation, unless real piety is his established character. "I, if I be lifted up," said Jesus, "will draw all men unto me;" and it is as the disciple of Jesus is crucified to the world and the world to him, that he attracts all men to the faith he professes. One example of humble, unassuming, self-denying religion will do more for the doctrines and principles of Jesus, than all those crowded assemblies, popular harangues, and ostentatious pageants, which are now the indispensable machinery of the church. The love that weeps over souls; the indefatigable charity that visits and relieves the poor; the life of purity, meekness, prayer, communion with God—Oh, it is these—and not restless, noisy, heady ostentation—not vanity and ambition, miscalled zeal—which are the true elements of spiritual power, the great vital forces to recommend and advance the cause of God among men.

My brethren, the truth I am urging is of special importance at this day. We live at a time when, and in a country where, the almost universal estimate of greatness is deplorably false. The showy declaimer who can move men's passions by the charlatanism of splendid rhetoric and pathetic images—though he inspire no high and holy purposes—is wondered at as a great man; while he who is silently instilling pure and noble impulses into a child, is rated as an inferior being, moving in a lower sphere. But what a mistake. Jesus declares that in his kingdom, true glory is humility—the spirit of unassuming active charity. He condemns as utterly inconsistent with the Gospel, that noisy zeal which loves to be conspicuous, which attracts notice and admiration by deeds which live only in their own multiplied echoes.

But I must not dwell longer upon this topic. Let me only, before dismissing this part of our discourse, remind you of the striking image by which the apostle enforces all that I have been saying. I refer to that passage in which, comparing the church to the human body, he says, that all the members are necessary, but that those members are most useful which seem to be most feeble.

“The eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee; nor, again, the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much more those members of the body which seem to be more feeble are necessary. And those members of the body which we think less honorable, upon these we bestow more abundant honor, and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honor to that which lacketh.” “Covet therefore,” (such is his application of the parable) “covet earnestly the best gifts. Yet I shew unto you something more excellent than these gifts.” Then follows that grand eulogy upon love—the love which meekly, humbly, kindly, gently, unweariedly seeks the good of others; which he pronounces far more noble and effectual than any gifts; without which, the most splendid endowments are only as “sounding brass and tinkling cymbals.” I have thus spoken of the inauguration and extension of Christ’s kingdom upon earth. Our remaining illustration of the text has reference to the reign of grace in our own souls. In this view “the kingdom of God cometh not with observation.”

“The Jews desired a sign;” they demanded signal portents and omens, to announce the Messiah. So, now; men expect to become Christians by external ceremonies, or by excitement, or by great terrors, or by some striking manifestations. But what is the admonition in the text? “The kingdom of God cometh not with observation; neither shall they say, Lo here, or Lo there, for the kingdom of God is within you.” How earnestly are you here warned not to look out of yourself for something to be wrought there; but to look in yourself—your own mind, conscience, heart—where God works secretly but marvelously. “My God,” exclaims Augustine, “how did I long to fly from earthly things to thee; and yet I knew not what thou wast doing with me. Thou wast going to snatch me out of the mire of pollution, and I knew it not. Too late I sought thee; too late I found thee. I sought thee at a distance, and did not know that thou wast near. I sought thee abroad, and behold thou wast within me.”

Applying the text to that great change called *conversion*, it is eminently true that "the kingdom of God cometh not with observation." I know that sometimes there are violent convictions, strong excitements, convulsions of the feelings, terrors of conscience, fearful agitations of the soul. This, however, is not because the kingdom of God cometh with observation, but because there is another kingdom to be subverted and thrown down.—Tumbling down an old house and removing the rubbish out of the way is always noisy work; but how silently the new house goes up. These tumults, commotions, perturbations, are the disturbance of the ancient reign of the world and the Devil; the shaking and breaking up of the power of inveterate passions and habits.

Take the case of Saul. That haughty fire-soul was dashed to the earth, his eyeballs were seared by the intolerable blaze, his whole spirit was "terrified and astonished" by the vision and the voice; but it was by an internal manifestation that the Saviour entered his heart. "It pleased God," he says, "who separated me from my mother's womb, to reveal his Son in me." The ministry of the storm, the earthquake, the fire, is only—like that of John—"to prepare the way of the Lord." The manifestation of the Saviour is not in these, but in the still, small voice;—a voice whose tones reach not the ear but the heart; a voice direct and personal, like that which the prophet heard; a voice most unexpected; a voice soft, indeed, and sweet, but whose very tenderness and sweetness melt the soul into contrition, and cause it to be wrapped in speechless adoration; a voice, in fine, which speaks pardon, reconciliation, peace, love, "joy unspeakable and full of glory." "Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time it was the time of love; and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness; yea I swear unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord God, and thou becamest mine."

"Faith comes by hearing;" the great change is generally experienced under the living ministry. It is, however, seldom wrought by the arguments or eloquence of the preacher; but almost always, by some truth which

has long lain dormant in the soul, and which makes the word spoken quick and powerful—even as the form of the buried prophet infused life into the corpse which touched it. “Say not in thy heart, who shall ascend into heaven? that is to bring down Christ from above; or who shall descend into the deep? that is to bring up Christ again from the dead. The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth and in thy heart.”

Or, this change may be the fruit of sanctified affliction; and, then, it is the silent softening power of sorrow. Or, this renovation may be traced to the influences of home; or to the hallowed nurture of the Sunday school. However introduced, the kingdom of God is ushered into the soul without observation. It must be so; for saving faith is really a state of the heart, the inward reception of Christ, the confidence which reposes entirely and forever upon his finished atonement and perfect righteousness.

And what is thus true of conversion, applies equally to *our growth in holiness, to the progressive triumph of the kingdom of God within us.* Let us not mistake the nature of piety and suppose that it is an external appendage; when it is the life of our spirits imparted, and ever growing by union with Jesus. If you would grow in grace, expect God, not outwardly, but within, where he “sits as a refiner and purifier of silver.” Very glorious was the temple, but “neither hammer nor axe was heard while it was in building.” Far more glorious is the pure heart, the spiritual temple of God; and in silence, in invisible majesty the work goes on there. We see the outer life of the Christian; but his inner life—his solitary conflicts, his prayers, his tears, his triumphs over sin—is without observation. True religion is not what men see and admire; it is what God sees and loves; the faith which clings to Jesus in the darkest hour; the sanctity which shrinks from the approach of evil; the humility which lies low at the feet of the Redeemer, and washes them with tears; the love which welcomes every sacrifice; the cheerful consecration of all the powers of the soul; the worship which, rising above all outward forms, ascends to God in the sweetest, dearest com-

munion—a worship often too deep for any utterance, and than which the highest heaven knows nothing more sublime. Progress toward God, is the law under which the renewed soul is placed. “Be ye perfect, as your Father in heaven is perfect.” But this progress is by growth, and growth is expansion from within. In chiseling and perfecting a statue, the artist plies his toil from without, and the work is before our eyes; but how silently, by what a hidden process the child grows. Spiritual growth is the silent development of that life which the soul receives from Christ at first, of that vital energy which it is always receiving from Christ—as the branch draws its secret nourishment from the vine.

“The kingdom of God cometh not with observation.” My beloved hearers, this kingdom has been ushered into the world; it is now extending over the earth, and, all around you, your friends and families are hailing the sceptre of the Prince of Peace. How is it with you? Is the kingdom of God within you? Has Jesus entered and set up his empire in your soul? While others are deceiving themselves with rites and ceremonies, you know that the kingdom of God is a spiritual kingdom. It is the sovereignty of him who “died, and rose and revived that he might be Lord of the dead and the living.” “The kingdom of God is not in word but in power.” “The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.” Has this kingdom been established in your heart?

This kingdom is the only real permanent thing upon earth. The kingdoms of this world crumble into ruin, but we receive “a kingdom which cannot be moved.” All earthly things—health, wealth, friends—all we love or prize—are changing, passing away; but this is a perpetual kingdom. “The world passeth away and the things of the world; but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever.” What a sublime truth. What a thought that was when God thought of such a kingdom. All that is in the world, all that can delight the senses, and captivate the heart, and inflame the imagination, all, all, is an illusion, a shadowy pageant, a sham, a fraud. There is but one thing which is true and real, and that is, a heart obedient to God.

“The earth and all the works therein” (the works of God and man) “shall be burned up.” What, then, shall be left? One thing; man. The only great thing upon earth, is man. The only thing which shall be imperishable amidst the flames of the last conflagration, will be man. And the only real imperishable thing in man, is spiritual life—the soul, and its immortal capacities for joy and woe. Eternal life is not only everlasting existence; it is a perpetuity of holiness, felicity, glory; and doing the will of God is eternal life; it is the bliss of heaven, it is our happiness now, and will be our happiness and glory forever.

This inward kingdom will survive, when temples of granite shall have mouldered into dust, when the most firmly seated thrones shall have melted in the last fires. It will be still receiving fresh accessions of life and light and love, when sun and stars have expired, and while eternity endures. Has this empire been established in our hearts? Has the will of God been crowned over our wishes, passions, affections? Recollect, that this ascendancy of Jesus is the kingdom of grace; and that, without this supremacy of his authority over the character of our souls now, it is the most deplorable delusion to hope that we can ever be partakers of the kingdom of glory. It is here and now that heaven begins; it is here, and now, that eternal life is infused into the soul. The children of the kingdom are not deceiving themselves with anticipations of a fancied elysium; they already begin to breathe celestial airs, and to taste immortal fruits. Much imperfection may still remain, much blindness and weakness; but still, in the personal experience of every heir of the kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world, it is a sublime, rejoicing, ennobling truth, that “Where sin had reigned unto death, grace now reigns, through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord.” To Him be glory and dominion forever. AMEN.

Sermon Fourth.

JESUS AND THE THREE DISCIPLES IN GETHSEMANE.

“THEN came he to his disciples, and saith unto them, Sleep on now and take your rest; behold the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going.”—MATTHEW xxvi: 45, 46.

ALL profound feelings love solitude. Alone we came into the world, alone we must leave it; and between these two events we are alone in our deepest experiences even from childhood. It is, however, especially in hours of spiritual conflict and depression that the soul recoils into lonely places, seeking to escape from the world, to commune with its own thoughts, in secret to weep and to spread before God those supplications which are the instinctive cry of a burdened spirit.

The hour of his passion is now at hand; and rising from the table on which they had partaken of that memorable supper, Jesus conducts his apostles towards the brook Cedron. Over this rivulet David passed, barefoot and weeping, when flying from his own son.—The Son of God now crosses it to drink the cup which his Father was about to give him. Arriving at Gethsemane, he leaves eight of his disciples among the trees which skirt the garden, saying to them, “Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder.” When ascending mount Moriah to offer up Isaac, Abraham said to his young men, “Abide ye here, and I and the lad will go yonder and worship;” he calls the act “*worship*,” because true homage to God is the immolation of what is dearest to

our hearts. And now, when the Redeemer is about to begin the great sacrifice, he applies the word *prayer* to this sublime offering of himself to God.

His humanity craving sympathy, he takes with him the three disciples whom he most loved, and who had been with him on the mount of transfiguration; thus consecrating Christian fellowship as a source of consolation in sorrow, as well as of delight in our spiritual joys. Soon, however, these cherished friends must be left behind; for the most congenial and loving can go but a little way with us in our bitterest trials. It was a support to the three Hebrews that they were together and could encourage one another; but we must enter our most fiery furnace alone, with no companionship of earthly sympathy. To the eight from whom he had separated before, his words were, "Sit ye here while I go and pray yonder." To Peter and James and John he gives a very different charge; he says, "Tarry ye here, and watch with me." And having thus spoken, he leaves them, and moves on beyond the reach of mortal voice or eye; there, alone in the darkness, to bow beneath his mysterious agony, and with strong crying and tears to pour out a soul already "exceeding sorrowful, even unto death."

"I know," says some writer, "but two beautiful things in the whole universe, the starry sky above our heads and the sense of duty within our hearts." Beneath that solemn canopy and with a spirit braving for us anguish beyond all conception—anguish which caused his humanity to quail and cry out for pity—this solitary victim disappears in the thickest shades of Olivet. Without pursuing the narrative farther, I come at once to the passage in that scene which is described in our text, and upon it I offer you a reflection or two.

I. And, first, I remark that the Son of Man is still betrayed by those who are among his professed disciples.

The perfidy of Judas Iscariot fills us with horror. For centuries he has occupied the highest eminence of infamy. His very name is so loathsome that the most abandoned wretch would shrink from bearing it. And out of all the multitudes who have ever lived upon the earth, of him

only do we certainly know that he has passed to a doom fearful and eternal; for he was "the son of perdition;" and referring to him, Jesus said, "It had been good for that man that he had not been born; language which, of course, declares that his is "everlasting punishment,"—for no matter how long a man may suffer, if afterwards he enters heaven, an eternity of happiness will infinitely counterbalance his past wretchedness, and it will be immeasurably better for him that he had been born.

It is impossible to think of the time or place which witnessed the treachery of this apostate, without being shocked at his baseness. The *time*; for when was it that he consented to the suggestions of his evil heart and commenced the execution of his detestable purpose? It was while Jesus was engaged in setting before his apostles the most affecting memorials of his disinterested and devoted love. Whether Judas participated in the Eucharist is a controversy into which I do not enter; he certainly partook of the Paschal love-feast, and heard Jesus utter those melting farewell words, "With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God." At the board spread with so touching a repast Judas was present, and it was then that he opened his whole soul to the demon. While the other apostles are dissolved in tears, while their hearts are wrung with sorrow, he is revolving his dark design, maturing his horrible perfidy; and leaving the chamber, he goes to the chief priests offering to betray the Redeemer to them.

Then, too, the *place* which he selects. In his account of this last visit of the Saviour to Gethsemane, John throws in a very affecting remark. He says, "And Judas also, which betrayed him, knew the place, for Jesus oftentimes resorted thither with his disciples." To Judas that garden was a familiar spot. Thither he had often retired with Jesus, when, wearied with the toils of the day, he said to his disciples, "Come ye apart into this retreat and rest for a while." There he had often sat, while Jesus unbosomed himself to those he loved. There he had learned those lessons of wisdom which the Saviour

reserved for the twelve, to whom it was given to know the things of the kingdom. There he had seen the Redeemer weep; had listened to the assurances of devotion so tenderly given to that little family; had knelt with them in prayer; had joined with them in songs of praise; and with them had received the benedictions of his voice trembling with love and compassion, as they arose to depart. And it is here—on this spot hallowed by such associations—availing himself of a knowledge thus obtained—that he betrays him; betrays him with a kiss—an act showing that, with all the hollowness of his heart, he had maintained towards the Redeemer an exterior of great reverence and affection, and enjoyed the privilege of intimate friendship.

At first we are disposed to ask why it was necessary that one of Christ's disciples should deliver him into the hands of his enemies. He was constantly before the people and could have been arrested at any moment. "In that same hour said Jesus to the multitudes, Are ye come out as against a thief with swords and staves to take me? I sat daily with you teaching in the temple, and ye laid no hold on me." But this fact, which has furnished occasion for many foolish cavils, is full of instruction. It tells us that the Gospel can be defeated only through the treachery of its professed friends. Until they conspire with its open enemies the cause of Jesus is invulnerable, and can defy all the malice of earth and hell.

Our abhorrence of Judas knows no bounds when we consider his professions, when we recollect how he had so won the confidence of the apostles that they confided their common purse to his keeping, and when we see him accomplishing his infamous purpose by the knowledge he had thus gained of all the recesses of the garden and all the avenues leading to it. Let us not suppose, however, that treachery to the Saviour died with this arch traitor. Jesus is still betrayed as basely as he was by that miscreant. Language is exhausted when we express our detestation of the ingratitude of Judas; and yet in our churches we have fellowship with multitudes who are equally insensible to every generous feeling. On our communion Sabbaths they partake, not of the

Paschal supper, but of the memorials of the Saviour's amazing love; and yet, during every day of the week, they crucify him afresh by tempers and conduct which cause his holy name to be despised and blasphemed. It was, of course, no palliation of the crime of Judas, that it was over-ruled for the accomplishment of God's purpose; such, however, was the fact. But what are the effects produced by the sins of those who now betray the truth and the cause confided to them? What purpose of heaven, what purpose except that of hell can they fulfill?

When we remember the lofty position occupied by this man, and then behold in him such a shocking phenomenon; when we see him conspiring with bloody murderers, volunteering to surrender his best friend into the hands of their vindictiveness, and leading them at night where they may seize him, we stand aghast. "What black passion, we exclaim, can have thus empoisoned the heart of one who has been so long with Jesus? What infernal lust has, with cankerous infection, gangrened the soul of a man who had acquired such a reputation for honesty that the common purse was left in his keeping? What hideous fiend possessed him, and hurled him from such a pinnacle down to bottomless perdition? My brethren, the passion which worked in his bosom was no unheard of, infernal vice. He was impelled by no demoniacal malignity such as rankles in the midnight assassin with bloodshot eyes and gory hands. The depravity which proved itself so desperate was precisely that which is now universal in the world. The lust which inflamed this son of perdition was exactly that which is now seen everywhere in the church; which no discipline treats as any sin at all, which in members, deacons, ministers is considered quite consistent with great piety, provided that, like Judas, they keep up a character for honesty. It was avarice, the love of money;—the very temper which is still causing the most deplorable perfidiousness in our churches; freezing up every noble impulse; opening the heart that the devil may enter and reign there; in short, engaging every faculty so deeply in the very plot of Judas, that were I

to run the parallel which I had intended while in my study, I would awaken more murmurs than one in this audience. Yes, were I to hold up a faithful portrait of this victim of covetousness trafficking his Saviour and his soul for filthy lucre, more than one of you now looking me in the face would be offended, would accuse me of being personal.

Not that avarice is the only passion which betrays Jesus. No, there are those whose price is not money, but some other gratification. "What will you give me, and I will betray him unto you?" How much of sensual pleasure? says Voluptuousness. How much of earthly honor? enquires Ambition. What position, what homage, what attentions from certain circles of society? asks Vanity. And so of other dispositions which are daily seducing into a fatal love of this world those who are communicants at the table of the Lord, and who once professed to have felt the transforming power of the cross of Christ. But when this arch traitor is held up to our abhorrence for his covetousness, the Holy Spirit designed especially to teach us the unsearchable danger of that passion, and with reason. For as the Scriptures declare that the love of money is the root of all evil, so I may say that there is no vice so prolific of every kind of faithlessness to the Redeemer and his truth. It so absorbs the minds of multitudes of those who are called Christians, that they are utterly forgetful of their religious vows and obligations. To this insane cupidity they devote all their time and energy, while they refuse to engage in any work for Jesus. To every call, every entreaty appealing to their knowledge of the grace of the Redeemer, and seeking to enlist them in his self-denying service, they turn a deaf ear; while no sacrifice is painful if it be for Mammon. Covetousness would surrender Christ's truth to his enemies, for it will contribute nothing to its defence; it hardens the heart against the wants and miseries of the poor—the peculiar representatives of Jesus; it defeats one grand design of the Gospel, which seeks to reunite all men in the bonds of a new and holy brotherhood; it assails all those enterprises of love which the mission of the Saviour has inaugurated,

and upon the success of which its triumphs are suspended. In short, if the character of Judas is odious because at such a time, and in such a place, he could be guilty of such perfidiousness, the picture still finds its original in many professed disciples who pretend to execrate him as the most abandoned of wretches, yet who on the Sabbath, in the sanctuary, even when receiving the supper, carry in their bosoms an idol which they worship, which even there predominates supremely in their afflictions, steeling them against every plea of benevolence, and to which they are ready at any moment, to immolate the honor and interests of Him who for them abdicated the riches of heaven, and became so poor that he had not where to lay his head.

I know that those who surrender themselves to this base lust are always ready enough with excuses; and do you think that Judas did not thus seek to deceive others, if not himself? Recall his conduct on a former occasion;—an occasion, by the way, which finely illustrates the contrast we often see between the noble generosity of women, and the sordid meanness so common in the other sex, (a contrast sometimes most striking because it exists in the same family, where the wife, like Abigail, has to do good by stealth, that she may elude the niggardly selfishness of the “churl Nabal” to whom she is miserably allied); I refer to the breaking of the box of ointment with which a woman embalmed the Saviour’s feet. The very sight of such a costly perfume inflamed the avarice of Iscariot. Had the casket been given to Jesus, it would have come into his hands as part of the common fund which he kept, and his prurient appetite instinctively calculates how much he could have embezzled in selling it. But does he confess to himself this disgusting cupidity? Not at all. It is thrift, a regard for the suffering poor which causes him to regret such extravagance. He is visited all of a sudden by a pang of the most disinterested charity, and asks, “Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence and given to the poor?”

In that case Judas had his specious pretext; and now in his infamous conspiracy with the priests let no one

believe that he unblushingly avowed to his own conscience the crime he had consented to perpetrate for thirty pieces of silver. If he understood the language of Jesus as to his death, he might say to himself, "This death is necessary for man's salvation; it is decreed by God; how then can I be culpable? Nay am I not fulfilling the divine purposes?" I see, my brethren, that this argument shocks you, but I tell you that there is no sophistry too monstrous for a man blinded by an inordinate passion. I do not suppose, however, that the corrupt heart of this traitor could for a moment have comprehended anything as to the sublime tragedy in which he was so prominent an actor; but still how many refuges and pleas he might have found for his avarice.

"Then Judas, which had betrayed him, *when he saw that he was condemned*, repented himself." This language implies that he had quieted himself by the hope of his escape. He knew the great popularity which Jesus had acquired by his deeds of mercy; the multitude would rise up and rescue him. Pilate was secretly disposed to favor him; he would interpose. He had more than once eluded his enemies when in their hands; he will do so again. God will not permit his innocent blood to be shed; has he not given his angels charge concerning him? Let the worst come, he can by a miracle defeat his executioners; and thus while I pocket my gains—his credentials will be more abundantly vindicated. Again, my brethren, I perceive by your countenances what you think of this sort of logic. But again I tell you that no self-deception is too gross for a darling lust. Again I affirm, that this reasoning in Judas would not have been more subversive of all morality, that it would have been far more plausible, than the pretexts with which we now every day see misers in the church violating their solemn obligations, palliating their faithlessness to Jesus and his cause.

Indeed, there was in Judas one trait which redeems him from our unmitigated abhorrence, and causes us to regard him with pity—I had almost said with respect; nay, I do say with respect when he is compared with

those traitors of whom I am now speaking. I allude, of course to his repentance. No sooner did he discover the fatal consequences of his treachery, than he was filled with remorse; he hastened to the chief priests, saying, "I have sinned, in that I have betrayed the innocent blood, and he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple and departed." From the slaves of avarice in our churches when do we ever hear such an acknowledgement? The deepest disgrace is inflicted upon the name of Christ by a covetousness which makes them a by-word in the community. If left to them, the interests of Jesus would be utterly ruined by a love of filthy lucre, either undisguised, or what is almost baser still, concealed by pretenses which deceive nobody. Yet they never blush for shame, they are conscious of no guilt in clinging with unremitting tenacity to everything they can grasp.

Nor does Judas only confess, he makes all the reparation in his power, by casting from him in horror the price of his treachery; but who ever heard of one such instance of compunctious visiting among the baptized Judases in our churches? For my part, although I have been in the ministry twenty-five years, I have never witnessed such a miracle; and if I should continue in the ministry for a hundred years, I have no hope that my eyes will ever behold such a phenomenon, my ears ever hear such a marvel. I have attended the death-beds of multitudes of people, but I never saw one who made restitution to God or man. Among these have been some who had amassed fortunes by means well known to everybody; but not one has ever confessed his cupidity—and disgorged even an infinitesimal fraction of his dishonest gains. Not a few have been professed Christians, with whose penuriousness I was quite familiar; having, as their pastor, been compelled to see its debasing, deplorable influence over them. In these, at least, I have expected to detect some contrition. I have thought that they would acknowledge their robbery of God—their delinquency to the cause of Christ, and would seek, by restitution, to prepare to meet a Judge who has declared that "no covetous man shall enter the kingdom of heaven." But these anticipations have always been vain.—

This fruit meet for repentance I have never seen. On the contrary, I have found such unfaithful stewards—while willing to provide for debts which human tribunals would enforce—while over-anxious to secure to their children possessions which as long as they could they had kept in their own unrelenting grasp—entirely forgetful of God, of his claims, and of the fearful reckoning accumulated against them for a perfidiousness so base, persisted in for so many years, and in spite of so many solemn warnings.

II. I pass, now, to a second reflection suggested by our text. It is that while the false friends of Jesus betray him, his true friends are strangely, criminally asleep.—When the Saviour said, “One of you shall betray me,” his disciples were “exceeding sorrowful;” and we, my brethren, would choose to die rather than betray him who is so precious to us, rather than ignominiously conspire with his foes. But, now, is this enough? If we love Christ ought we not, with Elijah, to be jealous for his glory and very zealous in defending his honor? Instead of this what is the fact? If some imitate the treachery of Judas, do we not, most of us, resemble the three other apostles, whose remissness, after such repeated admonitions, seems almost as perfidious?

I would not press this thought too far. I know there may be a good heart, with a bad constitution. Though a Christian is “not of the world,” he is in it, and its cares and distractions may abate the ardors of his devotion. I remember that even the wise virgins “slumbered and slept;” and that not only here in the garden at night, but upon the mount of transfiguration at noonday, sleep oppressed these three apostles who afterwards braved toil, danger and death for Jesus. I make all due allowance for the infirmities of our nature. But let no one pervert such a concession into a plea for lukewarmness. He who walketh in the midst of the golden candlesticks has warned us that apostasy itself is, in some respects, less injurious to his cause than lukewarmness. When facing the enemy, the soldier who refuses to fight is a traitor as well as he who deserts; and he is

something more, he is a coward. The wise virgins were overtaken by slumber, but it was because they were wearied with watching for the bridegroom; and when he came, their lamps were trimmed and burning. Would the Lord thus find us, should he this moment appear? The apostles slept, but it was because nature had been exhausted by sorrow and sympathy with Jesus, (Luke, xxii: 45.). Is this the cause of our supineness? No, no; our apathy proceeds from a want of love for the Redeemer and his cause. We do not sleep when danger threatens an object dear to our hearts, when our interests, or actions, or family are assailed. If the world and the passions have drawn others entirely away, the same baneful influences have infected our souls, and left scarcely a vestige of that loyalty which ought to be ever most vigilant and sensitive when the honor of the Gospel is imperilled.

We feel at once the affectionate confidence reposed in these three apostles, when the Saviour thus takes them with him into the garden, and comes again and again to them in his anguish. Now the same thing takes place as to us. To us he still looks; in us he still confides. His tears, prayers, agony in the garden have ceased, but if these are to triumph, if he is to see of the travail of his soul, we must be faithful. "Christ loved the church and gave himself for it." His spiritual body is far more precious in his eyes than that human form which he assumed and which Judas betrayed. This church, with its interests, its truths, its ordinances, its ministry, is now upon earth; it is, too, incessantly assailed by open or secret hostility; and it is committed to our keeping with the most unbounded reliance that we will, in watchfulness and prayerfulness, prove ourselves faithful to such a charge.

We are amazed that after so many warnings and entreaties, the apostles could sleep; but let us not expend our censures upon them. The same thing takes place now. Over and over Jesus says to us, "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation;" nor do we not hear and revere his voice; yet how ineffectual are his admonitions. In a region of sin and danger,—the air and the

earth swarming with foes,—so much perfidy in the church conspiring with the enmity of the world;—yet we can be heavy with slumber. Like Peter, we have again and again vowed that, though all should forsake him, Jesus and his cause should have our undying devotion; yet we are asleep. Like John, we love this adorable Redeemer, and have felt as we leaned upon his bosom, that our ardors could never languish; yet we sleep;—sleep while his enemies are sleepless in devising mischief against him. We are awake, keenly alive to every earthly concern; but for Christ, his truth and glory, we find our melancholy portrait in these three perfidious sentinels;—the night around them too faithful an image of the darkness of our minds;—the chilling air which benumbed their blood, an emblem of that coldness which causes our spiritual pulses to stagnate;—their deep sleep a type of that lethargy which paralyses our activity, our faith, our zeal, our love.

And as we have seen the Man of Sorrows go more than once to these disciples, rousing them to a sense of their danger and duty, so he now deals with us. Tenderly, lovingly, yet upbraidingly, he comes to us and says, “Can ye not watch with me one hour?” This is his language when he afflicts us. He then recalls us to a consciousness of his love, of our vows, and of our unfaithfulness. He quickens our faith, dissipates those illusions which were engrossing our affections, and in our inmost souls he whispers, “Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.” In the deaths of those around us, this is what Jesus is saying. He is reminding us that time is short; that the period in which we can watch and pray and work will soon be over; and he asks, if, with eternity before us in which to rest, we can find this little hour too much to devote to him? In the examples of those who have lived and are living nobly for God, he asks this question. He asks us, whether we have not the same powers, the same years, months, weeks, days; why have we not as earnestly improved and redeemed them? We admire their character and conduct, yet sacrifice to trifles and waste in sloth this fleeting time, these precious energies. By the zeal of the children of this world Jesus seeks to

quicken the children of light. We are humbled as we observe the contrast between the apostles and the foes of the Redeemer. Those sleep. These—Judas, the priests, the scribes—are too eager to think of slumber. The love of his chosen friends cannot watch one hour; but during all that eventful night the malice of his enemies is restlessly at work. We see the same contrast now. Seeking to gratify their sinful passions, or, at best, pursuing objects comparatively worthless, carnal men are indefatigable. With heaven before us, with objects at hand which might inflame the souls of archangels, we are soon weary in well-doing, and relapse into indolence.

Nor is it only by the voice of reproof and expostulation that Jesus seeks to rouse us to prayer and vigilance. By how many mercies, by what tokens of love does he not beseech us to cast off this unworthy inaction and to give him the loyalty and zeal which we confess are due to him. "Can *ye* not watch with me?" After the solemn dedication you have made, with such claims as mine upon your sympathy and devotion, must I still have to utter this complaint? During long years I stooped to poverty for you, I prayed and wept for you. For you I welcomed hatred, contempt, hunger, thirst, persecution, pain. For you I groaned and sobbed in the garden, and poured out my blood on the cross. And "can you not watch with me one hour?" *You, for whom I endured so many days and nights of weariness and sorrow; you whom I have rescued from such an abyss and raised to such glorious hopes; you whom I have so distinguished by my mercy and grace; you whom I have chosen as my friends, to whom I have confided my truth, my interests upon earth, and who have so often professed your undying attachment; *you*, O, cannot *you* watch with me one hour? If Jesus had reason to upbraid his disciples, he has much greater reason to condemn us; and but that his compassions fail not, we had long since been cast off forever.

III. The third truth which the narrative before us ought to impress upon our minds is very melancholy; and it is especially solemn at this time, when we are at the close of another year. I refer to the irreparable

losses we have suffered by sleeping, when we ought to have been awake.

In the wilderness the angel ministered to Jesus only after his victory. In the garden the heavenly visitant strengthened him in the midst of the conflict, so terrible was the agony. Still, however, he craved human sympathy and support. Hence he not only seeks comfort in opening his soul to his three disciples before his anguish began, but he places them in his neighborhood, saying, "Tarry ye here with me." Do not leave me; the sense of your presence here will support me in my tribulation.

Seeing, moreover, how intensely the hour and power of darkness would oppress him, and that its influence would fall upon them, he adds the second admonition to watch and pray. When he comes to them the third time, and finds them sleeping, he addresses them in language which at first seems inexplicable, but which in fact is full of meaning. "Sleep on now and take your rest, behold the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners."

That there is irony in this language I do not deny; but it is not what is generally so termed. The whole tenor of his conduct that night forbids every thought of anger and severity. There is, however, an irony of sorrowful gentleness and tenderness; and such are his words. It is the complaint of the Man of griefs, the pitying reproof of the compassionate Redeemer who in the conduct of his dearest friends feels a new sorrow added to those which already oppressed his soul. It is enough, he says, it is all over; I charged you to watch and pray with me, but you have been unfaithful. As far as I am concerned, your waking or sleeping matters nothing now. The hour is passed when your sympathy, vigilance, prayers could avail anything; they would be too late now. While you slept, treachery has triumphed; and this night I must be the victim of those who thirst for my blood.

Such, my brethren, is the explanation of language which at first seems strange; and this explanation turns the edge of the rebuke sharply and directly upon us all. For while Jesus has been warning us to watch and pray, we have been asleep; and by this faithlessness how much

has been lost and lost forever; how much for the church, for those perishing around us in the world, for our families, for our own souls.

Time has been lost, and who can appreciate this loss? Do we value gold and silver on account of the good they can purchase, and the evil they can prevent? Everlasting happiness or misery depend upon the use we make of time. Does the scarcity of an article cause it to be precious? * The work we have to do in preparing for eternity must be done in time, and that "time is short,"—a handbreath—a span—a little moment. While the whole of life is thus brief, our days may be cut off at any instant; how highly, then, should we prize the time we have. Yet how much of this little brief life have we wasted in indolence and worldliness; nor can we recover what has thus passed from us. Other losses may be repaired by pains and diligence; but this is irretrievable. As far as the past is concerned we may sleep on now and take our rest; no prayers, no regrets, no tears, can bring it back again. The memory of it may be redolent of joy, or poisoned with remorse, but the memory of it is all that stays with us. As Jesus is seized and borne away by the band, I see the three apostles looking on in bitterness; I hear them upbraiding themselves, saying, Had we only been faithful, he could not thus have been surprised; wretches that we are, his blood is upon us. Nay,—recalling his vows and stung by the sense of his perfidiousness—the earnestness of Peter's remorse—who seeks to repair the mischief, and single handed he attacks the band that he might rescue him; but it was too late. And, so, as we see the precious days, months, years carried away, our consciences may condemn us. Had we but been true to Christ, temptation could not have overcome us, passion and sin would have been conquered, and how different would have been the retrospect. Repentance may work in us indignation, vehement desire, zeal, revenge;—all, however, is in vain. We can look back to different periods once in our possession, but omnipotence itself cannot restore them to us.

* "And the word of the Lord was precious" (or very scarce) "in those days."—1 SAMUEL iii: 1.

In having occupied another whole year, we have had a treasure put into our hands which we had no right to expect. Many, many have passed to the grave who began the year with us, and with as fair prospects of seeing its close. We are still here, but they are gone, and the year is gone. Its deeds are among the archives of eternity, the seal of God has been set hermetically upon them. Some portion of the record we now would wish altered, but that is impossible. As, while the apostles were locked in sleep, the critical hour glided stealthily away, so, while we have been held in idleness, worldliness, wickedness, a vast number of minutes, hours, days have slipped from us; and soon the inevitable moment will arrive, when for us time shall be no more, when we shall review all our years as a tale that is told, as a dream when one awaketh.

With time many advantages have been lost and lost irrecoverably. During that eventful hour in the garden, while the apostles were wrapped in ignominious slumber, with what love, with what vigilance, with what strong cryings, with what weeping, groans, blood, was the Redeemer drinking the cup, subjecting himself to all his Father's will, agonizing for our salvation. And while we have slept, others have been improving every opportunity. They have been inflamed with love; they have been struggling with their corruptions and habits; they have been adjusting their hearts and lives to the will of God concerning them; they have wept for themselves, for their families, for a ruined world; they have "cried and sighed for the wickedness that is done in the land." In the spirit of self-sacrifice they have lived for Jesus; they have been strong in prayer and in faith; fighting the good fight of faith, laying hold on eternal life, to which they have been called.

Oh, that we had thus crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts; that we had thus loved and lived; but our lamentations are now unavailing. The Roman centurion could say to his soldiers, "Come," and they came. "Go," and they went. Not so we and our opportunities. Our selfishness and indolence made them depart; they have left us to return never again. And if our hearts

are in a proper frame, we will recollect them with the feelings which would overwhelm us in visiting the grave of a benefactor whom we had wronged ;—the fresh turf of which we would water with our tears ; while our souls would bitterly “ wish backward ; ” exclaiming, would he could return, that we might make some reparation, that at least we might be assured of his forgiveness.

Feeling all the unsearchable artfulness and malignity of the foe, and knowing the weakness of the flesh even when the spirit is willing, Jesus especially exhorted his disciples to watch and pray that they might not enter into temptation ; and such has been his admonition to us every hour ;—for every hour is to us one of danger. Have we obeyed him ? Alas, it is with the most substantial mortification we have to answer that question. Instead of unremitting vigilance, we know how often we have been careless, how little of earnest conscientious wakefulness has been ours. And we know, too, that, owing to this loose, dishevelled, heedless state of our souls, we have not only often been exposed to temptation, but we have been surprised by our corruptions in some unguarded moment. Well it is for us that *One* has been watching over us with ever wakeful solicitude while we slept.

And well is it that *One*—whose intercessions cannot fail—has been supplicating for us. Well for the holiest, that there is an Advocate who says, “ Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to have thee, that he might sift thee as wheat, but I have prayed for thee.” Prayer ; my brethren, what is not promised to prayer ; above all, what can be denied to the prayer of faith enforced by the potency, the talismanic virtue of the name which now makes us omnipotent in wrestling with God. Patriarchs and prophets were mighty in prayer. By prayer Abraham arrested the angels at the gate of Sodom, and disarmed them. By prayer Joshua stopped the sun in his course, and commanded his light. By prayer Elijah shut up and opened the heavens. But the humblest Christian has now a charm which was unknown to prophet and patriarch. “ Whatsoever ye shall ask *in my name*, that will I do.” “ If ye shall ask anything

in my name I will do it." "Hitherto ye have asked nothing *in my name*; ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." In this name had we prayed without ceasing, what holiness, what superiority to the world, what victorious light and strength would now rejoice our hearts.

O burden of prayer, which ought to press constantly upon our souls. O spirit of watchfulness, which ought to arm us with unsleeping jealousy; ought to give the alarm at the least appearance of evil; ought to cause us to resemble sentinels at night in an enemy's country, who sound every spot where the foe might lurk, and challenge even the fall of a leaf;—my brethren, there is not one of us who does not say with the dying Sutcliffe, "Would that I had prayed more;" not one who does not deplore the want of this ever sensitive circumspection. But it is now too late; all our regrets must be fruitless. Nor is it possible to tell what may have been the consequences of our neglect; what injury the cause of Christ may have sustained by our remissness; what the church, what those we love, what our own souls may have suffered.

-IV. But, while all this is most true, and as sad as true, let us not be disheartened. Even from our losses we may gather lessons of inestimable value. If reflection cannot restore the past, it can make us wiser for the future. Through our carelessness the flames have consumed our treasures; but among the ashes may be found pieces of gold and silver purified by the fire. And this is the truth I derive from the last words in our text,—from the exhortation, "Rise, let us be going." As to the past it is forever gone; watching and praying are of no avail; but the future is before us; let us address ourselves to that with all earnestness and diligence.

"That which is crooked cannot be made straight, and that which is wanting cannot be numbered." It is true wisdom to let irremediable evils alone; otherwise we waste our time and energies to no purpose. Our duty is to improve the present at once; if we delay, we will suffer other losses. That so much is gone, ought to stir us

up to value what remains; for, while the time has been shortened, we have the same work to perform. Soon,—on our death-beds, and in eternity,—we shall know the preciousness of time; but then it will be too late. Let us now be wise. Forgetting the things that are behind, let us press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Let us rise and be going. Too long have our thoughts, feelings, affections been entangled in this world; it is high time to be loosening them, to be fixing them upon heaven, with our loins girded and our lights burning to be “like men who wait for their Lord, that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately.”

Let us rise and be going. If we cannot go back and overtake the past, we can anticipate the future, and secure a rich harvest of blessings by what we now sow.—“To-morrow walks in to-day,” and with both hands offers us fresh opportunities; let us seize them with a zeal rendered indefatigable by our past experiences, “redeeming the time because the days are evil.”

Let us rise and be going. How long will we sit thus idle? So much to be done for Jesus, for the church, for the world, for our own growth in grace and holiness, and so little time left in which to do it; with such short lives, with eternity—its endless existence, its rewards, joys, horrors, just before us, can we subside into supineness and worldliness?

Let us rise and be going. We have slept when the alarm was sounding; when the cry of the watchman on the walls, when the call of the Redeemer, when the warning of the Spirit in our bosoms, when voices from time and eternity, from earth and heaven and hell, were all bidding us to watch and pray. Enough of this, enough of drowsiness and dreaming; we must now shake these off, put on the whole armor of God, and rouse ourselves to obey the high calling of God in Christ Jesus; “Watching unto prayer;” praying to him who watches over us, that he may keep us ever watchful.

But I will never have done pressing upon you this solemn exhortation, so often renewed and yet so little

heeded. Let me only remind you, that if you will sleep on, eternity must soon break in and smite this sluggishness with its terrors; and then you will sleep no more; then, when all too late, you will "wake to shame and everlasting contempt;" nor can any opiate ever still the weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth.

To those who have hitherto been neglecting the great salvation, the truth just urged comes with intense emphasis. Life is full of crises in which souls are lost; it is a scene in which perils lie in ambush all around you; and Jesus bids you stand upon your guard and secure the succors he proposes. If you suffer temptation to assail you in carelessness and prayerlessness, you are undone forever. Awake to your danger and your duty. In the spirit of the prodigal say, "I will arise and go to my Father." Your past has been spent in folly and sin; you have wasted your substance in riotous living; but you will still be welcome. And can it be necessary for me to urge motives upon you? While for you the tears of the Son of God are falling fast from his agonized soul, while the night is tremulous with his sobs and groans and cries, while he is pouring out his blood in the garden and upon the cross, can you be unmoved? can you remain in the ranks of those who hate him, who are banded together as the enemies of his cause on the earth? O, to-day a voice from heaven warns you that, while you say, Peace and safety, sudden destruction cometh upon you. It calls you to rise and be going. It tells you that life is going, that the day of grace is going, that the opportunity for salvation is going, that they will all soon be gone, that soon you must die; and then forever farewell the things which belong to your peace; farewell Sabbaths and sermons; farewell the prayers of pious friends, wives, children, parents; farewell the promises, the consolations of the Gospel; farewell heaven and hope forever.

But the truth before us is especially for Christians. To us, my brethren, Jesus says, "Rise, let us go." He seeks to rouse us up thoroughly to things which might shake the sheeted dead from their repose. The soul, salvation, perdition, death, the judgment, heaven, hell, a fallen world sinking into the gulf, a divine victim

expiring,—these, these confront us. Where can be found such arguments to raise us above sloth and selfishness? What can make us serious, if these fail?

Nor only serious. We are summoned to activity, to co-operate with Jesus. True, God's will shall be done, whether we wake or sleep; but God's will must be done by us, if we are to be Christians. The apostles could not save him, but they could suffer with him; and we are called, by toil, and self-denial, and sacrifice, to be "partakers of his sufferings," to fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ." Rise, then, let us go. We are not in darkness, that that day should overtake us as a thief. We are all the children of light, and the children of the day; we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep as do others, but let us watch and be sober; putting on the breast-plate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. Rise, let us go. The Master is come and calleth for us. The night is far spent. The morning light is breaking. The reveille is beating. Around us is a cloud of witnesses;—apostles, who have trampled under foot the glories of earth; martyrs, who amidst flames and scaffolds, have testified for the truth; saints, who still are meekly suffering and sacrificing;—these have been faithful, and we are to imitate their faith and patience. To-day, let us rise and go to our work. To-morrow, we will rise and go to our reward. To-morrow, death will come, and to our waiting souls his coming will be welcome; and in our ravished ears he will whisper this message—The time of your probation is over, the time of your departure is at hand;—rise, let us be going. I am come to bear you to that home in which there will be no need of watching and praying, to that rest which will be all the sweeter for the toil, to that crown which will be all the brighter for the conflict.

Sermon Fifth.

THE LAW AND THE GOSPEL.

“FOR what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”—ROM. viii: 3, 4.

EVEN in human governments, great emergencies and the expedients devised to meet them, are objects of profound interest. With what intense concern, then, ought we to contemplate that crisis in God's administration which involved the destiny of our race and the amazing scheme by which this difficulty was adjusted.

Everything in the history of man is strange and mysterious—his creation, his apostasy, above all his redemption. A previous celestial tragedy teaches us that a violation of the divine law at once works irremediable conclusions; but in the case of this planet there was a suprajudicial interference. The guilt and corruption of its entire population admit of no sort of doubt; yet not only is punishment respited, but there are tokens for good, signatures and symptoms of mercy and salvation which cannot be mistaken. It is to this wonderful interposition—an interposition represented in the Sacred Writings as tasking the wisdom and power of Jehovah—that our attention is this day invited.

I. In elucidating our text, we must first enquire what is meant, when it is affirmed that the law is “weak through the flesh.” In itself, I need not say that no infirmity can be ascribed to the law of God. Its inherent strength and

virtue can never be impaired. - "Of law"—such is Hooker's thoughtful and noble language—"there can be no less acknowledged than that her seat is in the bosom of God; her voice the harmony of the world; all things in heaven and earth do her homage, the very least as feeling her care, and the greatest as not exempt from her power; both angels and creatures of what condition soever, tho' each in different sort and manner, admiring her as the mother of peace and joy."

Now as the true glory of all intelligent beings is obedience to law—self-restraint, and not the freedom some speak of, (for what liberty has an angel but that of doing God's will?)—and as the law of the Lord is perfect, man's highest dignity, as his only happiness, must be in conformity to the law. But humanity is fallen. Our nature, once spiritual, is now degenerated and degraded. "The flesh"—that is, our corrupt passions—has enslaved the soul; and thus the law—though admirably efficient to regulate and uphold unfallen beings—is enfeebled of its capacity when addressing itself to the children of earth. The most prolific seed will be fruitless if sown in ashes; the grain is vigorous in itself, but it is weak through the soil. The most wholesome food will impart no nourishment if received into a system unfitted to digest it; the diet is nutritious, but it is weak through the diseased organism. The tube may be perfect, and the light perfect, and the artist a master of his science; but if the plate be not prepared, the daguerreotypist can obtain no picture. The instrument is not deficient in itself, it is defeated by the object upon which it would trace its images. In short, Phidias himself may hold the chisel; but what can he do if, instead of the Parian marble from which he may disclose the warm breathing statue, he works upon a lump of dirt that crumbles at every touch? He is weak, dishonored, his consummate skill and exquisite conceptions are reduced to utter mockery by the materials which he seeks to fashion.

To be more particular: "the flesh" has weakened and well nigh obliterated all sense of the law, all impressions of the law upon our conscience, so that the world is "without God" as to any practical recognition of his

moral government. That they are under human government, all feel. From the first dawn of reason the child naturally obeys the authority of the parent. In every state there is the lawgiver, and responsibility to law is the first universal instinct,—the lowest and the highest in the realm bowing to its sovereignty. And so in all the relations of life, between masters and servants, husbands and wives, guardians and wards—duty, obligation are innate and habitual. But God is nobody to the great mass of human beings. His laws, his administration and the penalties by which that administration asserts its authority—where are the people who naturally acknowledge these?

We need not enter into any discussion as to the import of the word “law,” as it is here used. It means the revealed will of God; and all possess this. We have it in the Sacred Volume; and the heathen, as the Apostle declares, carry it written in their own consciences; but what abiding recognition is there of this law among mankind? To holy beings it is a source of unspeakable delight to live in harmony with God, in all things to have his will clearly delineated. Very different is the spirit of an apostate world. Some boldly substitute their own will for the commands of the Supreme Lawgiver; either denying his existence, or rejecting all revelation of his will. Some bury themselves in the cares and dissipations of business or pleasure, thus shunning reflection as the culprit skulks from the officer who would arrest him.—Some cavil and refine away the stringency and spirituality of the law; accommodating its perfections to their passions. Some take refuge in their own weakness; others in vague conceptions of the mercy of God. And thus it has come to pass that, look where we may, an astounding phenomenon meets the eye: we see the world existing as if there were no God; or as if there were a God, but a God without one of the prerogatives and attributes of a Moral Ruler; without justice or holiness—without government or law. All around us we behold multitudes who in every act, word, thought, have to do directly with the Governor of all the earth, who are hastening to the tribunal of the Judge of all the earth;

and are yet wholly insensible of this fearful responsibility ; men observing, studying, discussing, respecting all other laws—the laws by which matter is controlled, by which mind is regulated, by which the blood circulates, and the winds blow, and the tides rise and fall, and the grass springs, and insects multiply, and dirt coheres ; men piercing the earth, fathoming the sea, expatiating through the skies, questioning the remotest star, tormenting with relentless scrutiny the minutest asteroid, tracking the flight of the comet, arresting the lightning, exploring the flaming abysses of the sun, and investigating the laws by which all these are regulated ; but entirely forgetting that moral law which pervades the secret recesses of their hearts, which surrounds them everywhere and still holds them in its grasp, whether they ascend up into heaven, or make their bed in hell, or dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, or shroud themselves in the thickest darkness ; men having no sense of accountability to God as the Supreme Lawgiver, acting with no reference to the approbation or displeasure of that Being whose eye is ever upon them, compared with whose glances the concentrated gaze of a gathered universe would be only as the stupid stare of an idiot ; living with no reference to the sentence he will pronounce ; spending their days, in short, as if the earth were absolved from the jurisdiction of Jehovah and no more under his dominion. Not, indeed, that this insensibility is never disturbed ; every one knows better.

There are times when this deep lethargy of unrenewed nature will be broken ; when conscience will no longer be stupified or trifled with ; when the most reckless will be forced to feel that there is another rule he ought to obey, and not his own selfish and corrupt inclinations.—But what then ? What is the effect of the light which then breaks in ? Roused from his apathy, compelled to see his own guilt, to tremble at the purity and inexorable severity of the law of God, the transgressor feels that his way is perilous and will be fatal ; but alas, he only furnishes another exemplification of the weakness of the law through the flesh. The passions which had before excluded all sense of the law, now only irritate him against it, and prevent his seeing its beauty and perfection. To

holy beings law and love are synonymous terms. But unconverted man hates the law which flashes vengeance on his darling sins; hates God, whom he impeaches for having enacted laws so opposed to his passions, or, for giving him passions so opposed to his laws; and even while conscience condemns his courses, he loves them and clings to them. He had lived without the law once.—Now it is brought to bear upon him, but only to show that it has no hold on his affections; only to prove with what rooted aversion his whole nature—appetites, inclinations, tastes, passions—repels the spirituality of the law, with what tenacity his heart cleaves to objects sensual and depraved.

You perceive, then, that the law is weak through the flesh, not only because the passions have expunged the natural recognition of God's government, but because when the commandment comes home to the unregenerate heart, it only betrays the lodged antipathy to obedience and holiness. Even this, however, is not all. The impotency of the law is only more deplorably betrayed after the influences just ascribed to the flesh have been removed. For let indifference give way to the deepest convictions; let hatred to the law be changed into ardent desires after holiness; what then? Why, humanity, fallen and enervated, has no power to obey the law; "it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." It perceives, indeed, the beauty, spirituality, perfection of the law; and as it contemplates that sphere of purity, O, how it longs to ascend there—how it pines to regain that lost paradise. Her eyes opened by the Holy Spirit to take in "the beauties of holiness," with what yearnings does not the soul thirst, pant after stainless perfection.—But it is a reach wholly inaccessible; and that beautiful, finished model which the law now displays, only proves more clearly how weak, how impotent it is to elevate a single child of Adam to its sublime and faultless standard. "I was alive without the law once, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died."

My friends, the truth I am now urging is one which many of us can attest from our own experience; for we can recall the time when we groaned under its burden;

when—in spite of our convictions, our ardent desires, our imploring prayers, our solemn resolutions and vows—we still found ourselves bound hand and foot by the passions, enslaved by the flesh,—our minds enslaved, our wills enslaved, our hearts enslaved, our conduct enslaved. And if at any time we seemed to have escaped the corruption of the flesh, we resembled a strong swimmer receding from a whirlpool—thinking himself freed from its coils, but soon finding that it is only an eddy which has borne him away that it may bring him back again and plunge him deeper into the maelstrom. Yes, we know this, and not from books nor libraries, but from our own bitter experience. Our souls have it still in remembrance and are humbled within us.

And what we have thus painfully learned, our Apostle describes most graphically just before uttering the text, in the portraiture of a penitent, convicted, longing, crying for deliverance, but overwhelmed with the hopelessness of his condition until Christ is revealed in him. “For we know that the law is spiritual; but I am carnal sold under sin. For that which I do, I allow not, for what I would, that I do not; but what I hate, that I do. If, then, I do that which I would not, *I consent unto the law that it is good.* Now it is no more I that do it but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me, (that is *in my flesh,*) dwelleth no good thing; for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find, then, a law that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man; but I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O! wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?”

II. The law is “weak through the flesh,” you understand the import of these words. I pass now to our second article, in which I would enquire, what it is that the law cannot do because thus frustrated.

However transcendent the native power and dignity of the law, we know, as a matter of fact, that it is a dead letter with reference to any saving efficacy for man. Such is its infirmity that it cannot achieve even the first work in our salvation ; it cannot produce repentance.

That there may be a knowledge of sin by the law, and that this conviction may prepare the way for the Gospel by shaking the conscience with guilty terrors,—fear making a breach through which love may enter—this I have already said ; but these alarms do not cause real penitence. “*Godly sorrow* worketh repentance unto salvation.” It is not the dread of punishment, but *godly sorrow*—a grief like that which God feels over sin—it is this alone which will ever humble the soul in true contrition ; but this cannot be produced by legal enactments. Of sin itself, no one was ever convinced by the law ;—of sin I mean in its essential heinousness, and in its aggravations,—of sin as the abominable thing which God hates,—as high treason against Jehovah’s government,—as an outrage against all his perfections. And if legal precepts and promulgations fail to show the true character of sin, much more palpable is their impotence to shew us our real character, the magnitude of our own guilt. Vainly shall we attempt this. It is to no purpose that ministers sent to preach the Gospel, forget their mission, and hope to convince the world of sin by preaching the law. Upon the crookedness of men’s ways we may place the straightness of the commandment. We may apply its searching caustic light to the heart, the thoughts, the life, and pronounce all sin,—sin against an infinite God, against an infinitely just and holy law, and therefore working infinite mischief. All this may be done ; but all this will not bring any man to a true sense of his sinfulness. Something else is needed. It was not when his accusers sought to convict him by the law, but when a very different voice adjudged him, that Job, though “*upright and perfect,*” abhorred himself and repented in dust and ashes. It was not before the august glory of the law, but before a very different presence, that the holiest of the prophets exclaimed, “*I am undone.*” It is not by the denuncia-

tions of Sinai, but by a very different revelation, that the Holy Spirit "convinces the world of sin." And without this revelation no human being will ever see himself as he really is, utterly ruined and lost. No, no, the sense of God and his authority is too feeble; self-love and the passions are too strong; the heart is too desperately wicked and deceitful; the mind and conscience are too hopelessly darkened, perplexed, and perverted.

The law, therefore, cannot effect the first work in our salvation; it is too "weak through the flesh" to produce repentance. Suppose, however, that this could be done, what now? What ground or hope of acceptance with God can the law propose to a penitent who presses that solemn enquiry, "What must I do to be saved?" Law can, of course, make no provision for pardoning—much less for rewarding those who are guilty of transgression. Such a clause would in itself be an absurdity; it would not only repeal the statute, but offer a premium for crime. Law provides only those penalties which are an element in all legislation. If, then, men carry within them the consciousness of sin; no matter how sincere and bitter their contrition, the law can be only the "ministration of condemnation." Vainly do they lament the past, and promise for the future, and bewail and afflict themselves; the law can take no notice of all this; all this neither satisfies its present demands nor vindicates its majesty insulted by "sins that are past." It must, therefore, still pursue them with its avenging thunders. Salvation by the law is plainly a foregone, ruined, abortive scheme. If a single human being escape punishment and reach heaven, there must be some interposition arresting the course of justice, and disarming the law, not only by a pardon, but by a perfect righteousness,—so that God can be just and yet justify the culprit—can be "a just God and a Saviour"—a condition which seems to carry, in its very terms, a glaring contradiction;—for it pardons and yet punishes; it holds a man under the law, yet makes him independent of it.

A third impotency of the law grows out of that just mentioned, and is shewn by the same train of argument. This has reference to peace in the conscience.

Conscience anticipates the future judgment of God, and its power is fearful, because it compels us to condemn ourselves. Pride may defy the decision of a foreign tribunal; the passions are ingenious in evasions and artifices when others accuse us; but no man can resist his own sentence upon himself. Fixing her keen eye directly upon the secret thoughts and motives and hidden springs of action, scrutinizing the heart in all its tortuous windings and shiftings, conscience pronounces judgments which can neither be questioned nor reversed; and before her stern tribunal all confess their guilt. It would, of course, be unreasonable to expect great terrors in the bosoms of those whose lives have never been stained by great crimes; but all feel the conviction of delinquency and transgression. And as the law can furnish no refuge from this self-condemnation,—nay “as the strength of sin is the law”—we must remain under the oppressive consciousness of irretrievable ruin, unless some hope be disclosed of which the law gives no intimation.

I will only add—what indeed the apostle chiefly intends by the text,—that the law has no sanctifying power. It cannot fulfill its own righteousness in us, cannot transform us into its own model. As to bringing the children of earth to exemplify its unsullied beauty and purity, it is an utter failure. However it may prescribe statutes, and command us to love, and fulminate curses upon disobedience, it has no sort of influence in winning the heart to the life required,—in obtaining any reflection or repercussion of the perfectness it exhibits. An act of Parliament, it is said, can do anything; but it cannot make anybody love you. Human passions cannot be regulated by legislative enactments. A man enslaved to his appetites cannot be emancipated by legal enforcements. A divine Liberator is needed. Our affections will be only alienated by threats and severities; they can be attracted only by love. Penal rigors have been tried in religion, but did they ever

make a real convert? And as for governments, it is notorious, that punishments only harden the criminal and make him more desperate. To reach and soften the heart, and purify it, and engage it in love and loyalty to God, can never be the work of jurisprudence. Some means besides the sternness of command, some expedient very different from the law, is indispensable, if the heart is to be restored to God in confidence, gratitude, and cheerful consecration.

III. I have thus illustrated two truths in our text. I have shewn how the law is "weak through the flesh;" and how it is therefore utterly ineffectual to do anything for man's salvation. It remains only that we glance at the expedient of the Gospel, and see how, by the great atonement, God hath gloriously and wonderfully achieved what the law could not do. "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God hath done by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for a sin offering;—thus condemning sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit."

Were it not always necessary that our sermons should be imperfect compositions, I would pause for a while, that I might comment upon the language here employed as to the mission of the Redeemer. The phraseology is full of significancy, and bears a close resemblance to other passages which you will at once recall, and which affirm the incarnation of a Divine Being so distinctly, that we must either receive this great doctrine, or reject the New Testament as a revelation from heaven.

That the words "his own Son" are an assertion of the Saviour's equality with the Father, we know from an interpretation perfectly decisive. In the fifth chapter of John's Gospel we have the comment of the Evangelist, declaring that, in calling God his Father, Jesus "made himself equal with God." (v. 18). In the tenth chapter of the same Gospel, when Jesus demanded of the Jews, why they wished to stone him, they replied—and he acquiesced in their construction of his words—

that they did not stone him for any good work, but because in styling himself the Son of God, he, being a man, made himself God. In short, and not to weary you with quotations, ponder the address of the Father to the Son. "Unto the Son he saith, Thy throne O God is forever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom." There can be no question then, that the mysterious Person here called "God's own Son" is a divine Being.

Now observe what is revealed as to his advent. "When the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men, and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." "God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh." We have already seen the import of the title "God's own Son;" and these passages at once established the fact that the mission of Jesus into the world was an astonishing anomaly in the divine government,—the inauguration of a new and amazing constitution, by which a glorious substitute should represent us before Almighty Justice, and should finish an atonement for human iniquity.

I must not dwell, however, upon this great doctrine, a doctrine transcendentally above human thought, and carrying in itself the abundant attestation of its divine origin and character. What demands our attention at present is, the efficacy of the Gospel to supply the deficiencies of the law. Observe it is for those only who confide themselves to Jesus and seek to conform themselves to the influences of the Holy Spirit,—for those "who walk after the Spirit,"—that this expedient is provided. As to the impenitent, the law is by no means weak; it will forever assert its majesty and inviolability, by discharging its vengeance on their souls. It is for salvation, that the law is impotent, and that Christ cru-

cified is the power and the wisdom of God to retrieve all the inadequacies of the law.

What is the first insufficiency of the law which we have noticed? It is its failure to work repentance for sin. But what the law could not do is done most effectually by the Cross and its awful exhibition of intermingled justice and holiness. In the dismal spectacle upon Calvary, in the immolation of such a victim as the only reparation to the violated majesty of the law; in the stupendous fact that "God spared not his own Son," but poured upon him, when he took our place, all the gathered tempest of wrath; and that the sore and ineffable agonies of a Divine Being were necessary to make atonement for man's guilt;—in all this what an intense and terrible revelation of the evil of sin.

"God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for a sin offering, *condemned sin in the flesh.*" This mysterious language has been the theme of much learned discussion; but I humbly conceive that its meaning is plain enough; and who is not dismayed by the heinousness of sin as he comprehends that meaning? It was in the *flesh of his own incarnate Son* that God condemned sin." Our fallen race, the Apostle designates as "sinful flesh." Our depravity and the weakness entailed by that depravity could not absolve us from the eternal obligation which binds every moral existence to conform to the will of God; and, pursued by the relentless inflexibility of the law, our destruction was inevitable. "To redeem them that were under the law," God's own Son assumes "the likeness of sinful flesh." In our humanity, and for us, he presents himself before Eternal Justice, he "bears our sin in his own body," and he is not spared. He—"the Brightness of the Father's glory and the Express Image of his person,"—he whom the Father seemed to love even more tenderly in his humiliation than in his original glory, and delight in whom caused the divine complacencies twice to break out in audible, I had almost said irrepressible exclamations,—he is not spared. Not a pang is mitigated, not a stroke is suspended. The inexorable decree goes forth, "Awake, O sword, against the man that is mine equal,"

and his frame is smitten, and his spirit is consumed as a sacrifice for sin. After this, can we forget that sin is the abominable thing which God hates, and call it *vice*—thus regarding it only in its relation to man? After this, can any one make light of sin? or lull himself with the vague hope of mercy—the hope that a rebel may insult and defy the divine justice, and outrage the divine government, and then degrade the Sovereign Ruler and Judge, stripping him of every attribute, and forcing him to a weakness which would disgrace the humblest earthly magistrate?

“Condemned sin in the flesh;” it is not for nothing, my brethren, that such emphasis is placed upon these words. Never in the annals of Jehovah’s empire had there been such a condemnation of sin; never such a sentence against its infinite malignity; never such a proclamation of the awful and inviolable sanctity of the law, of the desperate issues which follow instantly wherever transgression goes, and of the immaculate holiness of the divine character in its severe adherence to moral order and its inflexible opposition to iniquity. Sin had been condemned before; condemned upon this fallen earth, when there went up the wail of myriads whelmed in the remorseless billows, and when a fiery deluge blended the cities of the plain in one red, blazing sepulchre; condemned in Paradise, when light and joy and love withered from those blooming bowers; condemned even in heaven, when angels as high and pure and dear to the divine heart as any of the sanctities who stood thick around the throne, were precipitated into eternal misery, where they now lie, under chains of darkness, unvisited by one ray of consolation or hope. But all these were feeble expressions of the true nature of sin, compared with that which was written in the flesh, the blood, the heart of God’s own Son.

And this exhibition of the real character of sin has this great advantage, that it is practical. God sent his Son “for sin”—for a sin offering—to bear our sins. Here is, then, no abstract manifesto, but a judgment, an execution which comes home to us. For it is our sin which is thus baleful; which is not only a crime, but a

crisis so terrible. Before such a catastrophe the mind is startled, alarmed, frightened, appalled. And the more we study this phenomenon, and come to see that nothing could adjust the portentous emergency but such an altar smoking with such blood, the more we stand aghast at our utter ruin, the more must we shudder at the unsearchable malignity of sin. "I will pour upon the house of David and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of grace and of supplication; and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him as one that is in bitterness for his first born." Such is the promise, and wherever there is a genuine revival of religion, wherever there are true conversions, this prophecy is fulfilled. Brainard, the missionary, tells us, it was not when he preached the terrors of the law, that the Indians were dismayed at sin, but when he preached the Gospel. As he unfolded the mercy in the death of Christ, those who accepted the great atonement were filled with a sense of vileness; and those who had no hope were filled with such a sense of the difference between the lost and saved in view of the sacrifice of the Cross, that they were overwhelmed with anguish, crying out with tears and sobs and almost falling into despair.

The second deficiency of the law is, that it cannot lay any foundation for our pardon and justification; and, here again, what the law could not do, God has done by the mission of his Son. That there must be some ground upon which sinners may find acceptance, all admit; for if a man be left to endure the sentence pronounced against him, his ruin is certain. Indeed, as the apostle elsewhere intimates, all men seek to lay some foundation. And, of course, this foundation must be laid before a single step can be taken in the great business of salvation.

Those who have never reflected upon the purity of the law, the inflexible severity, the inviolability of the Divine government, and the evil of sin as a breach upon that government, can have no adequate conception of the moral difficulty in the way of any dispensation from

punishment. The law is the "ministration of condemnation" only; it is the Gospel which is the ministration of righteousness. By the Saviour's interposition, not only is pardon secured, but a perfect righteousness through which we are justified. And what matchless mercy, condescension and grace is this. If God be true, sin is infinitely odious to him. If men are saved, it can only be by some expedient which shall be no truce with sin, but shall record and publish this uncompromising abhorrence. In the sacrifice of Calvary this requisition is abundantly satisfied. In pouring the vials of wrath upon that innocent and august substitute, there was the most memorable assertion of the divine holiness and justice which had ever been presented to the contemplation of the moral universe. And by the same astonishing catastrophe, there was finished an atonement for sin, which we feel at once is abundant. The penitent believer now exclaims, "I thank God through Jesus Christ." I thank God all is safe. He cannot doubt that such a contrivance must secure for him salvation, with all which is comprehended in that glorious word. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also, freely give us all things."

Thus making ample reparation for guilt, which the law could only punish, the blood of Jesus, of course, satisfies the third impotency of the law. It sheds peace into the conscience. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, *the chastisement of our peace was upon him*, and with his stripes we are healed."

I have before said, that by "law," we may understand generally the rule of right and wrong which God has established; and it is ever to this rule, or to some act as an expiation for the violation of this rule, that men repair for tranquillity of soul; but it is to no purpose. Let a man adopt never so stern a course of self-denial and reformation; let him be never so punctilious in framing his ways to turn against the Lord; let him go to the sanctuary, to the Bible, to his closet, to deeds of virtue

and charity—to penances, confessions, mortifications, lacerations of his body; and—to soothe himself under the sense of sin and imperfections in these services—let him sing lullabies about God's mercy and goodness; all this cannot avail. "When Ephraim saw his sickness, and Judah saw his wounds, then went Ephraim to the Assyrian, and sent to king Jareb; yet he could not heal you, nor cure you of your wound." A poor, stricken, distressed, heavy-laden soul may resort to every refuge, may pour its flowing agonies and wear itself out, to appease the inward terrors; it will, however, find no comfort. An agitated conscience is not thus drugged and silenced.

But let this weary, guilty thing cease from his vain legal hopes, and turn to Jesus, and what a change! At what time his sins are flashing in, and his corruptions darken and appal the mind, let him behold the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world, let his eyes be averted from his own works to that blood which cleanseth from all sin; and one look is enough. As he catches the first glimpse of Jesus, I see the shadow pass from his countenance and light playing there. What is it, I say, that thus affects you? He cannot speak, but I see it, I understand it well. His tears tell what object has struck his sight. And how altered is everything now. All is still; the clamors of conscience are hushed; the tempest rolls away; every fear is quelled; and peace, assurance, heavenly serenity settle down upon the spirit. It is the "blood of Christ who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God" which must "purge our consciences from condemning works." The redeeming sacrifice, the perfect propitiation; this alone can assuage the pangs of conscious guilt.

That God's own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh, exhausted all the vengeance to which our sinful flesh stood exposed, and magnified the dignity and authority of the law, and secured a full discharge for all who trust in him,—this certainty will at once infuse tranquillity into the conscience. Once this amazing truth is fully received, the soul reposes with all its interests upon that finished work; faith sees that our acquittal is not on the ground of our virtues, but on account of Him in whom

is all the righteousness of God; the heart rejoices in a salvation which is independent of lamented imperfections and sins, which is, from first to last, the triumph of sovereign, almighty grace over conscious infirmity, faithlessness, and self-condemnation.

The last weakness of the law is, its want of sanctifying influence, and the Gospel is God's remedy for this. The text, as I have said, alludes particularly to this impotency; but the other requirements and inadequacies which I have enumerated are directly, necessarily within its scope and contemplation. For before the question of personal transformation can be entertained, it is indispensable that the outraged law be appeased,—that there be a "forgiveness of sins that are past." The Son of God came "not by water only, but by water and blood."—Without the shedding of blood there could be no remission of sin; but without remission of past guilt and of those delinquencies which the holiest must daily confess, even if the law could impress its image upon a child of Adam, it would only be wasting its virtue upon a condemned criminal awaiting his execution. It would achieve nothing toward his redemption from the grasp of offended authority; it would, in fact, drive him to utter despair, just as his increasing holiness caused him to see the atrocity of sin, the righteousness of the law, the necessity that the threatened penalty should be awfully enforced, and, of course, his own inevitable, irreparable ruin.

But the law has no efficacy to produce in us any conformity to the pattern it proposes. It is the Gospel which possesses this wonderful property,—that it charms away the power of corruption and transforms us to the righteousness of the law, at the very time that it absolves us from all the penalties of the law.

The law, as we have seen, can never awaken a proper abhorrence of sin; it is before the exhibition of the Gospel that the soul sees in sin an inherent evil more to be dreaded than hell itself. Zeleucus, king of the Locri, enacted a law, the penalty of which was the loss of both eyes. His only son violated that law. To save him from total blindness, the monarch caused one of his own eyes

to be torn from its socket. Who of his subjects could have witnessed such a spectacle without awe? Could the son ever have looked upon that royal face thus marred and bereaved, without finding his whole soul dismayed, filled with horror at his unnatural crime?

The law is the "ministration of death," working only despair of obedience. Pressed by a sense of guilt from which there is no deliverance, disheartened by the conscious impotency to retrench a single corruption, there lies upon the spirit of unpardoned man a cold sickening weight. He is a bankrupt owing millions, but unable to pay one farthing. And as that bankrupt will become reckless and plunge deeper and deeper in debt, so hopelessness of deliverance will cause a man to abandon himself to his evil passions;—sin thus "working all manner of concupiscence in him by the law itself."

The Gospel is the "ministration of the Spirit." It absolves us from every debt but that of gratitude and love, and thus causes us to revive and respire in the liberty of the sons of God. It assures us that all is *freely* forgiven. It does more, it adds a new outfit of strength to obey the law. Not only are all old scores wiped out, but the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit is promised, by which a life of holiness may be at once commenced, and surely perfected. The law says, "Do this, and live." The Gospel says, "Live, and do this."

The whole force of the law is expended in stern and awful denunciations, which repel and irritate; in penalties which, when executed, cause the damned to "gnaw their tongues and blaspheme the God of heaven." The power of the Gospel is the soft but resistless compulsion of love. It brings the soul under the influence of new motives, and by goodness, by mercy, by gentleness, it does what no severities can do; it slays the enmity of the carnal heart,—melting and fusing it into gratitude and affection. It, in fact, exemplifies the sovereign efficacy of this divine solvent for the most vindictive hostility; "If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink; for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head."

The law commands us to love a God who to our guilty race "is a consuming fire," and whom it can represent only as an affronted and awful sovereign. The Gospel reveals a God who is Love. To disclose his character it takes us not to the garden whose gate is waved over by the flaming brands of avenging cherubim,

"With dreadful faces thronged and fiery arms;"

but into that other garden where incarnate Love sobs and prays. It unfolds his attributes, not as proclaimed from the "mountain which burned with fire," but as shining in softened harmonious lustre upon that other mount, where Bleeding Love expires for our sins. Before such discoveries the heart can hold out no longer; the world is crucified to us and we to the world by the cross of Christ; pride and hatred melt away; gratitude and devotion claim and monopolize the heart.

In fine, the law comes to us in cold black letters; its highest perfection can only exhibit its precepts clearly in lifeless words. The Gospel writes these precepts, "not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God;" it translates, transfigures the commandment into a warm living language whose accents breathe love into the soul. It is no longer in written characters, but in the character of Jesus, that we see our duty. Holiness, in the Gospel system, is following the Redeemer. He is the embodiment of the law; and thus the personal attachment which every Christian feels to the Saviour draws us to the law. "The love of Christ constraineth us;" captivates us; brings us under the influence of a loyalty to truth and duty, of a spirit of cheerful performance, of a self-immolating conformity to the will of God—which no jurisprudence, not even that of heaven, can ever produce. Old legal things—legal hopes, legal fears, legal "working in the very fire, and worrying ourselves for very vanity"—"old things are passed away, behold all things are become new." All things are now seen in new aspects; the commandment is not grievous but joyous; obedience is not enforced subjection, but the choice of a loving heart. A new Personage—who is a new power—acts upon the mind and will; casting over every

precept the attractions which bind us to him, and imparting new hope and life and strength. Sin has no more dominion over us because the Holy Spirit is given to us. "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus makes us free from the law of sin and death, and engages us in a service which is perfect freedom.

I have now finished the discussion of this subject. Many reflections are suggested, but I must be brief, consulting here that rich economy of the treasures furnished by the text, which I have been compelled to practise throughout this entire discourse.

And first, let us, once for all, understand what the Gospel is, and what is an evangelical ministry. "I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and *him crucified*;" such is the language of the prince of Gospel preachers. Even his enemies confessed his accomplishments in all classical and refined literature, his vigorous intellect, his profound knowledge and surpassing eloquence. He could have bandied logic and rhetoric with the noblest of the Grecians. But he despises all the excellences of human oratory, and as in his religion, so in his preaching, he glories only in the Cross. He will know nothing but Christ, and will know him only as a crucified Saviour. Let us comprehend all the import of this fixed purpose in our apostle; let it admonish us that Christian pulpits are erected for "the preaching of the Cross."

When I enter a church, what is my object? Is it to hear ethical disquisitions? Or do I go there to see a sinner like myself—a man loaded with infirmities as I am, who calls himself a priest, puts on sacerdotal vestments, arrogates official sanctity, glorifies the efficacy of sacraments, and revives the Jewish ritual and altar and hierarchy? No; never. I go there to hear of the blood which cleanseth from all sin; of the one Priest who has entered heaven for me; of a pardon which takes me just as I am—bowed down under a consciousness of confessed and lamented sin—and gives me the blessed assurance of a perfect righteousness, in which I shall stand faultless before him who charges his angels with folly, and in whose sight the heavens are not clean. I want a preacher

who points me to "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world;" who speaks peace to my troubled conscience; who dispels those fears which daily defects and conscious weakness inspire, by the promise of the Holy Spirit.

He knows nothing of the desperate condition of humanity, and nothing of evangelical truth, who exhorts guilty man to be spiritual and makes his righteousness the condition of acceptance with God; and calls that preaching the Gospel. Such homilies have never caused the first movement towards real holiness. But even if they could draw the sinner into the paths of virtue, they could do nothing for his salvation. Our virtues are good currency among men; but they are not government legal tenders to discharge our obligations to Divine Justice and to purchase heaven. "By grace are we saved," and not by the law. 'The first act of the vilest—yea, and the last act of the holiest—must be, to turn away from all we have done or can do to satisfy the divine law, and to embrace the salvation offered through Jesus,—to transfer our confidence from our virtues and graces as entirely as from our vices,—and to repose forever upon that atonement which secures peace and eternal safety from the condemnation of the law. This is the Gospel,—the good news of "redemption which is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood."

But, now—here is our second reflection—where the sacrifice of Calvary is truly accepted as the expedient by which, in the jurisprudence of heaven, the judicial righteousness of the law has been abundantly fulfilled *for us*, it will also, along with the sense of pardon, send its sanctifying power into our nature. By a mysterious influence which the world cannot comprehend, which can be known only by experience, it will win the heart to love and obedience, and will thus fulfill the moral righteousness of the law *in us*. "Do we make void the law through faith? God forbid; yea we establish the law." Not only does faith repair the outrage done to the majesty of the law by pleading the sublimest satisfaction, but it restores its dethroned supremacy over the

heart and life. He who can take encouragement to sin from such a revelation of grace, has never received the truth as it is in Jesus. The Gospel of the grace of God is the most glorious mirror of the divine perfections; and he who comes to Jesus will be gradually changed into that likeness. "Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." Sin dies hard anyhow; but it does not die at all except through the power of grace. "Sin shall not have dominion over you." Why not? Because ye are in the dread of legal punishment? No, but because a new principle has been introduced into your hearts, because love reigns there. "Sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law but under grace." The very grace which freely pardons, sweetly constrains the Christian to walk in the ways of holiness and true righteousness. Those who truly receive Christ "walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." So effectually does the Holy Spirit mortify the power of corruption, that the apostle confidently exclaims, "How shall we who are dead to sin, live any longer therein?"

If any neglect this salvation, they must perish; nor need they go to the judgment seat to find out that they destroy themselves. They dare not assail the perfection of God's law, but they neither respect its purity, nor dread its penalty. No legislator is bound to superinduce a new constitution, by which culprits may escape; but this God hath done, and much more than this. And, now, when such an extra-judicial economy—so adjusted to the entire emergency of our ruined condition—is offered to every man, if any stand out, and harden themselves in pride and obstinacy, they must through eternity bewail a doom, in which mercy such as could never have entered the thought of unfallen angels, has been wilfully and wantonly turned into an element of anguish such as can never enter into the misery of fallen angels.

Christians, see here your religion. It is love. Man or angel must be free; if there be force, he obeys necessity, not God. He who overcomes by force overcomes but half his foe. The Gospel is the religion of love—God

is omnipotent because he is the essential, quintessential Love. A being with more love than God would be stronger than God. Love is of all things the softest yet the most potent. It is royalty without its force—or rather it is royalty with its most resistless, because its sweetest, gentlest force. Let this love dwell in your hearts and be exemplified in your lives. See too the ground of your full assurance of faith and hope, and the true motive of your obedience and loyalty. Live for him who thus interposed to save you. Consecrate to this adorable Being all you have and all you are. Your salvation is his business; make his service your business and delight. And while thus devoting yourself to this Redeemer, rejoice evermore in him,—in his truth—his person—his almighty grace—his unchangeable love—his everlasting faithfulness—his precious blood whose efficacy reaches farther than the eye of your conscience ever penetrated, and cleanses you from a sinfulness more inveterate than you have ever conceived to be yours.

Let the contemplation of these truths lay our pride low in the dust, as we ascribe all to him who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests to God and his Father. And let it also elevate our souls to that sublime confidence which—exulting in the great atoning sacrifice—triumphantly exclaims, “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.”

Thy judgments, Lord, are just; thou lov’st to wear
The form of pity and of love divine.
But mine are sins thou must not, canst not spare
While heaven is true, and equity is thine.
Yes, O my God, such crimes as mine, so dread,
Leave but the choice of punishments to thee.
Thy justice calls for vengeance on my head,
And even thy mercy may not plead for me,
Strike! It is right. Though endless death should flow,
I bless the avenging hand that lays me low.
*But on what spot can fall thine anger’s flood,
Which hath not first been drenched in Christ’s atoning blood?*

Sermon Sixth.

THE TRUE CHRISTIAN.

“FOR the love of Christ constraineth us: because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them and rose again. Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh; yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more. Therefore if any man be in Christ he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold all things are become new.”—II COR. v: 14—17.

IN politics—with its turnings, windings, shiftings, shufflings, everlasting sinuosities, tortuosities, ambidexterities—there is nothing like trimming; it saves one from the charge of inconsistency and apostasy. Mr. Burke said, “I pitched my whiggism low, that I might stand by it.”

In business, too, a man often succeeds through the absence of all strong generous elements in his character and conduct. Let there be no noble impulses, no warm tender sensibilities, no sympathy with human misery, no large public spirit,—the want of these qualities is a great negative treasure to him who lives only to amass riches upon this earth.

In religion, however, there can be no timid and heartless conservatism. He who pitches his piety low that he may stand by it, will find that he has no piety which will stand by him in the trying hour. That to be Christians we must be positive and earnest in the service of Jesus is at once admitted by everybody; but the very readiness with which the proposition is conceded may prevent our feeling all its import. Nothing is more com-

mon than the self-deception by which a truth is received as so true that we do not give ourselves any trouble about it. When it is announced, we at once reply, Nobody doubts it; and because nobody doubts it, we allow it to sleep in our minds and act as if it were a falsehood.— Now surely in a matter of such infinite importance as salvation, this supineness is most deplorable. Surely a man in his senses ought constantly to be comparing his conduct with his creed; he ought to say to himself—I believe this truth, I know it, what has been, what is its influence upon my character? are my hopes, my plans, my life in harmony with my principles?

While it does not become us to prefer one part of the Scriptures to another, still there are passages whose wealth appears the more unsearchable the more carefully they are explored. They resemble certain spots upon which God has chosen to amass every sort of affluence.— On first reaching them, we are lost in admiration of the waving harvests all around, but we afterwards find that there are fathomless mines of gold beneath the surface, veins of the richest ore which can never be exhausted.— Our text is one of these glorious portions of the Bible. It contains in itself the entire Gospel. It deserves our most careful attention, because it announces God's judgment as to the character and destiny of every child of Adam. "We thus judge"—this is the final, irrevocable decision; and what is this decision? It comprehends three propositions, which will be the subjects of our commentary to-day. The first is, that a Christian is a man in Christ; the second is, that a Christian is a man for Christ; the third is, that a Christian is a new man.

I. A Christian is *a man in Christ*. "If any man be in Christ." "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." Referring to some who had been converted to God before him, the apostle says, "Who were in Christ before me;" and when anticipating his own final acceptance, it is only because he would be "found in him." But I will not multiply quotations. You read your Bibles and can at once recall other passages.

“If any man;”—observe, my brethren, how intensely personal a matter salvation is. This thought is of vast importance at this day, when almost every enterprise is delegated to the agency of organized masses of men or women, and when, consequently there is great danger of our losing the sense of individual responsibility. Unless we bear in mind that religion is an active inward principle, and that social relations are useful chiefly as the means of promoting spiritual growth and energy to the soul, it is to be feared even in the best societies, nay, even in the church appointed by Jesus for the noblest purposes, that we may surrender our consciences to others, and substitute sympathy with their opinions for that internal freedom and self-decision which alone can secure the approbation of God. Death, the judgment, will insulate each of us; and the Gospel now seeks to separate every one from the crowd and to speak to him of his “own salvation.” When Jesus would cure the man who was deaf and dumb, he “took him aside from the multitude.”

“If any man be in Christ”—here then, is the epitome of evangelical religion. To be in Christ is everything.—It is of infinite consequence, therefore, that we comprehend the meaning of this phrase; nor is it difficult to see what is its general import. By this expression, we are taught that God regards the Christian not as he is in himself, but as he is in Jesus, with whom he is identified, into whom he is incorporated by faith. You meet a child of God every day in the streets, in the market, in the place of business, and he seems to you like other people. In the eyes of the world he is like other people; they say of him, that he is a good man, only a little too strict about some things. In his own estimate he is perhaps worse than other men; certainly it is the publican and not the pharisee in whom he sees himself. For before his conversion how vile was his life—his soul hath it still in remembrance and is humbled within him. And now how much in his daily experience to fill him with the most substantial mortification, to cause him in deep self-abhorrence to exclaim, “In me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing.” Convictions so clear that a voice from heaven could lend them no additional cogency, and yet

so inefficacious; mercies forever multiplied, and still my heart to remain what it is; so much forgiven and yet so little love;—am I, can I be a child of God? Such are his confessions and lamentations. What then is the difference between the Christian and others? It is this.—He is in Christ Jesus. Thus the Bible regards him; thus we should regard him. If ever he enters heaven it will be because he is in Christ; and there this will be his highest distinction. Speaking of his raptures, our apostle renounces all merit in himself, and ascribes his exaltation entirely to his union with Jesus. “I knew a man in Christ, caught up into paradise; of such a one will I glory; yet of myself I will not glory but in my infirmities.” In a word, the true church, above and below, is composed of those who are “accepted in the Beloved,” and are “gathered together in one in Christ.” It is only in this view that the Father looks upon us and deals with us. John beheld “a rainbow round about the throne,” so that turn which way he would, “he that sat upon the throne” saw objects not in their own colors, but in the softened rosy lights shed upon them by that medium.—And thus God upon his mercy seat views us; not in our deformity, but as invested with the glory of the adorable Mediator, clothed in his righteousness and grace.

In general, then, you perceive what is the meaning of the phrase before us; you comprehend that as to be “without Christ” is ruin, and to be “with Christ is” heaven, so to be “in Christ” is the abridgment of Gospel piety. But upon such a subject we must seek to penetrate a little farther, and when we analyse this expression, we find it full of heavenly consolation and joy.

I know, my brethren, that the offence of the cross has not ceased; that here, at this day—as at Athens, in Paul’s day—men will listen while we speak of God as a Father, but will betray their rooted repugnance as soon as we preach Christ as a Saviour. Foster is utterly mistaken about this matter. Among the reasons why evangelical doctrines are distasteful to persons of refinement, he mentions the use of certain technical phrases; but it is not the words, it is the ideas which are repulsive to the carnal mind. The Gospel reveals peculiar truths, the depth

of which can be expressed only by the exact language which the Holy Spirit has chosen, and this language is offensive only because it embodies such truths.

I admit that the doctrine of salvation by grace has been abused, and hence some have been tempted to conceal it, or to explain it away; but this is as if one should cast his treasures into the sea, because some vicious people put their money to vile uses. The great fundamental verity that Christ has done all and that we receive all freely, is often perverted; I know and lament this, but what then? does this disprove its authenticity? A medicine is discovered as to which we are assured, that, if administered properly it will certainly heal a disease, but that if taken improperly it will be fatal. A cure follows its right exhibition in every case; but in one instance it has been given improperly and the most disastrous effects have followed. What sort of logic would that be which argued that the prescription could not have been genuine, because the very mischief ensued of which we had been forewarned? Over and over the Bible admonishes us, that men will turn the grace of God into licentiousness; that where the Gospel is preached a depraved heart may prostitute it into this abominable inference, "Let us continue in sin that grace may abound." The very misuse which the enemies of Christ make of this truth proves, therefore, that it is the truth which Paul preached.

The unbelief of men cannot falsify the revelation which God has given; and now when we examine our text and enquire into the meaning of these words, "*In Christ*," we find in them this mysterious and glorious announcement that a living faith unites us personally with Jesus and makes us partakers of his death. "If one died for all, then those all died;" this is the declaration of v. 14. Our English version renders the passage obscure, or rather it is a mistranslation. It seems to refer to a previous state of spiritual death, but this is not and cannot be the force of the Greek word *apethanon* which means, "died," and conveys this truth that all died for whom Christ died.

Now, at first, this seems to be a strange argument, for, if Jesus came to deliver us from death, how can it be said that all died because he died for them? Surely the effect of his death ought to be, that none would die.

It is plain, therefore, that there is a profound and mysterious truth here revealed, and that this truth is, the vicarious character of Christ's death. He died for us, in our stead, as our representative; and if he thus died for us, we, of course, died when he died. If the government accepts a substitute to render service, the law regards the service as rendered by the principal. If an ambassador, in the name of his nation, negotiates a treaty, it is the act of the nation.

I need scarcely remark that the doctrine before us gives no sort of countenance to the heresy of Universalism.—For in the original it is said that “those all” (*hoi pantes*) share in Christ's death, for whom he died. And who these are the text tells us. They are those and only those who are “in Christ,” who are “new creatures,” who “live not unto themselves, but unto him that died for them and rose again.” It is of these the apostle is speaking, and, as I said before, he refers not to a preceding state of apostasy, but to an act finished by us—a sacrifice offered by us when Jesus died. That by nature we are “dead in trespasses and sins” is abundantly taught elsewhere. Here, however, this cannot be the idea, not only because we have seen that the language forbids such an interpretation, but because it would be absurd to say that our depravity and corruption were transferred to our substitute. Of course the apostle employs the term “death” in the same sense when applying it to us and to Christ, and in each case it means the penalty of the violated law; this Jesus satisfied for us, and we satisfied in him. If any doubt could exist upon this point, it is removed by the succeeding context, where the sacrifice of this sinless Being is represented as a sacrifice which not only atones for our guilt, but causes us to stand justified in him. “He hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”

Here, then, is one glorious truth in our text. "Christ died for our sins." The holy victim "bare our sins in his own body on the tree," and "there is, therefore, now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus."—But this is not all. It is not enough that Jesus died, unless he arose from the dead; hence it is declared in the passage before us, that he not only died for us, but "rose again,"—rose again for us in the same sense in which he died for us, that is, as our representative.

Yes, beloved brethren, it is not only with a dying Saviour that faith unites us, but with a living Saviour as well. We are not only "crucified with Christ," but we are "risen with him." Having shared his death, we also share his resurrection-life. Every Christian can say, "I know that my Redeemer liveth." I know it, because I feel the power of his resurrection awakening in me a new power, raising me from the death of sin to new hopes, to new joys, to a new life.

"If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins;" why must this be? Because he died in our sins, and we died in him as our substitute. And if he never rose he is still dead, and we are still dead in our sins. As gold, however precious, does not become currency—a legal tender—without the government stamp, so the death of Jesus, though most amazing, would have wanted the divine seal of validity, had he not risen. "But now is Christ risen from the dead."—"He was delivered for our sins, and rose again for our justification."

Christian, enter into this truth and see the ground of an assurance, a gratitude which ought to defy all the assaults of earth and hell. "God who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved); and hath raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." And comprehend, too, the source of your strength and your joy; it is a living Saviour; a Redeemer who died once, but ever liveth to give life and victory to his people. Often should we look back at his sufferings, but never without also looking up to the

throne to which he has passed through those sufferings. The cradle at Bethlehem is now empty; the night air of the garden no longer resounds with his "strong crying and tears;" no longer is his bleeding form nailed to the cross. The manger, Gethsemane, Calvary now say, Why seek ye the living among the *dead*? *he is not here, he is risen, and ye are risen with him; because he lives ye shall live also.* "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again to a lively (life giving) hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation."

II. A Christian is a man *in Christ*,—this was our first proposition. A Christian is a man *for Christ*,—this is our next topic of discourse.

I said just now that the believer died in Christ, satisfying the penalty, so that the law has no punitive claim upon him. Is he therefore absolved from all duty? Not at all. He is bound to Jesus by the strongest obligations. When the surety pays a bond, the debt is not cancelled, but is transferred to him, with an additional claim upon the gratitude of the principal. Hence we are "not without law to God, but under the law to Christ." And the apostle thus speaks of his death in Christ and of the new life of devotion springing from that death, "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."

Reverting to the text, observe the truths there announced. First, we died when Christ died. By his interposition we atoned for our guilt. What then? What is the influence of this amazing grace and mercy? It captivates our hearts and constrains us to live not for ourselves, but for him who died for us and rose again. In other words, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us," and he has thus acquired a supremacy which causes every Christian to worship and serve him. "Ye are bought with a

price, therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit which are God's."

"That they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves." Do not misunderstand this language. There is no piety, nay there is a most subtle self-love in the very interdicts which some people impose upon their natures, as if mere self-denial possessed merit. Self-immolation for the sake of self-immolation is either the austerity of the church of Rome, or it is a sort of refined epicureanism. Not martyrdom, but the object for which martyrdom is endured confers glory upon the sufferer. It is not because she patiently welcomes care and sacrifice, but because she thus forgets herself in seeking to promote the virtue and happiness of her children, that we admire the devoted mother. It is because he exposes himself to hardship and danger for his country, that we honor the patriot. And so with the Christian. It is not self-neglect, but the surrender of his own pleasure and interests to promote the cause of Jesus which constitutes his true life. He lives not unto himself, "but unto him that died for him and rose again."

Nor let us suppose that this life of sacrifice is easy. The mainspring of human feelings and passions is supremely selfish. Tell a bad man that self is his God; he will deny it and make loud professions of disinterestedness. But a good man confesses this deceitful and desperately inveterate vice, and seeks to subdue it. Easy to live not for self! he who is thoroughly in earnest will not find it so. There must be the controlling impulse of some motive, at once all pervading and most powerful. I say all pervading; for as the healthy functions of the body would be impossible if vitality were only in the hands or the feet,—as the life of each member must be a part of the life circulating through the whole system; so there can be no real self-denial, unless the heart be under an influence reaching all its passions and affections. And the motive must be most powerful. Examine the reasons why one man fails, and another succeeds in triumphing over every difficulty, and you will generally find it in the feebleness and potency with which motives act upon them respectively. It is a great thing to have a noble ruling passion; to have ever

before us some worthy object which fires all the ardors of the soul and absorbs the warmest aspirations of the heart.

And, now, where can such a motive be found—a motive pervading and potent enough to disengage the heart from the love of self as the one great monopolizing object? The love of Jesus and the sentiments kindled by that love do exert this imperial efficacy. However impossible without this ascendant influence, yet under its expulsive power, the Christian can say with truth, “I live not unto myself;” “I am not my own;” my fortune, my health, my talents, my time, my influence, my life are not my own, they are Christ’s; I live for him who died for me and rose again. Yes, if we are in Christ, we will be for Christ;—for him always, and all for him; thinking for him, acting for him, sacrificing for him, living for him, dying for him.

O, think of the abyss in which Jesus found us; the helpless hopeless ruin in which we were plunged. He came to “seek and to save that which was lost.” Innocence was lost, strength was lost, communion with God was lost, the soul was lost, heaven was lost, all was lost and lost seemingly in irretrievable perdition. Lift your eyes to the glory, the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory to which Jesus has raised us. Above all, the amazing stoop of love. Little cared he that he must abdicate the praises and glories of heaven; that he must wrap his deity in mortal weakness, poverty, shame, contempt; that on his naked head the malice of earth and hell must be exhausted; that he must be smitten, spit upon, nailed to the cross; that his Father’s presence should be withdrawn, and his soul be deluged by a sea of anguish. Of all this he recked not. Dearer to him was the salvation of one sinner than all the blessedness of eternity; and for that, he, “the Brightness of the Father’s glory” welcomed the humiliation, the tears, the blood, all the accumulated anguish of the garden and the cross. Ponder this most amazing phenomenon. Revolve all the wonders of his incarnation, his life, his death; what thoughts, what emotions, do such meditations inspire? I know, I lament the deadening effect of

familiarity with this theme; but, after all, it is impossible for a Christian to contemplate such an object and not find his heart burning with gratitude and love; his passions and affections must be brought within the circle of a new influence, they must revolve around a new centre; he will feel the force of that motive which the Scriptures constantly propose, as the irresistible argument to engage all our devotions, and to fix them forever.

He who serves such a Saviour only through fear or interest, has never yet truly known Christ. The love of Christ makes self-denial not only possible but glorious. "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." "To me to live is Christ." "For the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all then those all died; and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves but unto him which died for them and rose again." This is, this must be the language of a soul which truly knows Jesus and is inflamed with his love.

III. Our last article regards the Christian with reference to the change which has come over him. *He is a new man.*

Indeed a man in Christ and for Christ; a man renouncing all strength and merit, receiving all grace now, hoping for salvation hereafter, only through the work of another; and yet giving himself to toil and sacrifice as if all depended upon his own exertions;—such a man must be a new creature,—a being quite unique, a phenomenon unintelligible to the wisdom of this world. Nor is there any exaggeration when the apostle declares that as to him, "old things are passed away, and all things are become new."

Had I time I would speak of the importance of this change. Of all the vicissitudes which can befall us, none can compare with this. We may know many other changes; we may pass from obscurity to renown, from poverty to wealth, from sickness to health; but if we

are real Christians, our conversion is the grand epoch of our existence. Paul viewed all the circumstances of his life from his birth up, as preliminary to this spiritual change. The true repentance of a single sinner awakens emotions of rapture in heaven; and those who have experienced it feel that it transcends all other blessings. As the apostle declares that the death of Christ is the august consummation which all prophecy anticipated,—whose influence radiates through all time and is transmitted into eternity;—so his death in Christ is the great era in a man's history for which all previous events in his life prepared the way, the memory of which consecrates the time and the place that witnessed it, the effects of which are felt while life lasts, and the consequences of which shall endure forever.

I ought, also, to say something as to the necessity of this change, no matter what may be our natural character. "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature;" *any man*—the most moral, as the most vicious—the amiable Nicodemus, the devout Cornelius, as well as the ferocious Saul and the savage jailer at Philippi. Nay, in some respects, this revolution is more wonderful, as it is more difficult, in men of a severe morality, than it is in "publicans and harlots."

I will not dwell, however, upon these points. What I now press is the extent of this change. All admit that there must be some change, that something is wrong and must be altered; the question is, what is wrong? what must be righted? And in the passage under consideration we have the answer. God tells us that there must be an entire radical change, that all is wrong and everything must be rectified.

"If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature;"—to what does this language refer? It refers to our condition in the sight of God and in the contemplation of his violated law. The words are generally applied to the spiritual change experienced in conversion; and certainly there is then wrought in the soul a glorious renovation. Let us never forget this. Let us remember that "if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his;"—that, "without holiness no man shall see the Lord;" that, "they who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with

the affections and lusts;" that, "if we are risen with Christ" and "our life be hid with Christ in God," we will "mortify our members which are upon the earth;" that, "in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything nor uncircumcision, but faith which worketh by love;" that, "there is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit." All this is abundantly taught in the Scriptures.

But this is not the idea which is in our apostle's mind. He is speaking, not of a Christian's character, but of his state; not of the progressive mortification of sin by the believer, but of an act finished at the moment of our union with Jesus; not, in short, of our sanctification, but of our justification. Sanctification is a slow, arduous life-work; and after years of spiritual conflict, "the flesh still lusteth against the Spirit." If the apostle had been describing the work of holiness, how could he say "Old things are passed away"? Where are those saints in whom there are no vestiges of evil? Alas, how many old things—old thoughts, old remembrances, old propensities, old habits, old temptations, old infirmities, old sins still dog him continually and cause him to lie low before God in penitence and shame. In spite of restraints and chastisements, how much old corruption still clings to us. The best of us must walk softly under a sense of our vileness. Observe too, the language he employs. When speaking of our inward life, the Scriptures say that "Christ is *in us*." The expression "*in Christ*" alludes to the act of faith by which we are justified. Again in sanctification there is a great difference between Christians; but the text represents them all as upon the same footing. In all alike, old things are passed away, and all things are become new:"—an assertion that is true only of justification, which is perfect the moment a man believes in Jesus. In short, we are expressly informed what is the apostle's meaning. In the Epistle to the Romans he distinguishes between *reconciliation* and *salvation*;—using the former term to signify the justification of a sinner, and the latter to comprehend the whole spiritual progress of a Christian, including his growth in grace.

“If when we were enemies we were *reconciled* to God by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled, we shall be *saved* by his life.” Now in the verses following our text the “new things” and the “old things” spoken of are declared to be things connected with our reconciliation—things wrought by God that we might be reconciled. “And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ. For he hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”

It is, then, of our condition in Christ that the apostle speaks; and how truly and gloriously may it be said of those who are in Christ Jesus, that “old things are passed away, and all things are become new.” Oh, gone—forever gone is the old sentence of the law. Blotted out forever is the handwriting of ordinances which was against us. Borne away into the wilderness is the curse entailed by Adam. Rolled off is the old burden, and broken is the galling yoke. The old doom, the old legal terrors at the thunderings of Sinai, the old wretched abortive hopes and efforts to find peace by our own works and sacrifices,—all; all have passed away forever. And “all things are become new.” A new foundation for pardon is now seen. The soul is clothed in a new righteousness; exults in new prospects, new hopes, new dignity, new strength, a new outfit of gratitude, love, joy; it is translated into a new world, breathes a new atmosphere, is conscious of an entirely new existence.

“If any man be in Christ he is a new creature;” to what does this language refer? It refers to the change in our views and estimates. The scales falling from his eyes, the Christian sees every object in new and spiritual aspects. “Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh; yea though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more.” The Socinian knows Jesus after the flesh; admiring his character, his life, his death, as the impersonation of the highest benevolence. The moralist knows Jesus after the flesh; studying his doctrines as a perfect code of ethics. The sacramentalist knows Jesus after the flesh; beholding

him in rites, ceremonies, externalisms addressed to the imagination,—adores him in a picture, eats him in a wafer. We ourselves, beloved, once knew Jesus after the flesh. From childhood we have learned to know and reverence his name, to honor his church, to kneel and call upon him in prayer. But when it pleased God to call us by his grace and to reveal his Son in us, what a change in our knowledge of this adorable Being; what new spiritual apprehensions at once broke in upon our ravished souls of his majesty, his suitableness, his love—of his mystical union with us, and of the mystery of our union with him in his death, his resurrection, his glory.

The apostle declares, too, that this knowledge of the great mystery of godliness caused him to regard men in a new light. He regarded himself, in himself, with abhorrence, despising as dung all the righteousness in which he formerly gloried, and glorying only in the righteousness of Jesus; saying, with the church in the Canticles, "I am black but comely, because the sun hath looked upon me." And so of other men. "After the flesh," men are distinguished by their birth, rank, wealth, honor, learning. As we form our estimate in the light of the Cross, these superficial ephemeral differences sink into insignificance. We see that the only real distinction is between those who are in Christ and those who are out of Christ; the latter being the children of wrath and perdition; the former being now the children of the high and holy majesty of the skies, and destined through eternity to be "the heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ."

I will only add, that these words "old things are passed away, behold all things are become new," refer to the conduct of the true Christian. If we are in Christ we will, of course, recognize our new relations to the world and to the church. If we are crucified with Christ, the world is crucified to us—at least in our purposes, in our ardent prayers, and in some actual superiority to its lusts, passions, maxims, examples. And so, too, if we are Christ's, his cause, his truth must be dear to us; all other relations, social, professional, domestic, will be subordinated to the spiritual union which identifies us

with his church. Yes, if we are Christ's, he that sitteth upon the throne of our hearts says, "behold I make all things new;"—a new heaven is above us, a new earth is around us.

My brethren, let us enter into these truths, and feel the greatness and happiness of the Christian. "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be." And if, as the apostle adds, "the world knows us not," so much the worse for the world. If the world despises the Christian, the Christian looks with unutterable pity upon the blindness and misery of the world. How insignificant is everything in the world; the polluted joys it can give; the honors, ribbons, stars, garters, decorations which monarchs bestow; compared with the dignity and felicity of him who can look up to the high and holy Majesty of the universe and say, My Father! Oh, if we believed these truths, earthly things would appear to us only as the toys which we loved when we were children, but which we despised when we outgrew such puerilities and imbecilities. Feeling our union with him who is the Celestial Life to be a happiness and a glory infinitely transcending sublunary distinctions, we would collect into one aggregate all which men love or pursue, and trampling them under foot, we would habitually and exultingly ascend to Jesus, exclaiming, "Whom have we in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that we desire besides thee."

And let us remember that such blessings place us under the most solemn obligations. We are debtors not to the flesh to live after the flesh; but to Jesus, to live for him who died for us and rose again. Never, until this glorious Gospel of the Son of God is fully received, will the church shake off her inglorious sloth and worldliness, and come forth in her imperial strength and majesty.—It may safely be affirmed, that no cause not directly sustained by God could possibly escape utter ruin, if its avowed advocates should be as heartless and selfish as are most of those who profess to be the disciples of Jesus. I have no sympathy with croakers who are ever deploring

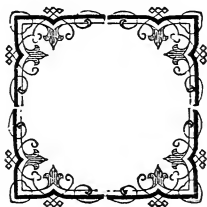
the degeneracy of the church. Our apostle complained that in his day, "all sought their own, not the things of Jesus Christ." But when we think of the resources possessed by Christians at this day, and see the covetousness and selfishness which refuse everything but some immeasurably disproportioned contribution, we feel painfully how little is known of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ; how few of those who seem to be converted have been brought under the unmutilated influence of the Cross.

Let the adorable mystery of the atonement exert its entire potency over our hearts, and what a change would come over the churches and over a world feeling the influence of such churches. "Old things"—old indolence, old avarice, old lukewarmness, old faithlessness—would at once pass away; and all things would become new. New power would be imparted to the ministry; new invigoration would be infused into the word, a new and resistless impulse would be given to the enterprise of missions; faith would become a new word—a principle working by love, purifying the heart, overcoming the world; religion would be a new celestial life derived directly from Jesus, with all its pulsations beating, not intermittently, but constantly, for him; none of us would live to himself, and no man would die to himself, but living or dying, we would be the Lord's; each of us would say, "To me to live is Christ,—I am not my own, Jesus hath won me, ransomed me with his blood, and I am his for time and for eternity; nor would we know any desire so energetical, as the aspiration to be one with him now and forever.

My brethren, to know that we are Christ's is the only assurance which can fill us with peace in a dying hour. That I belong to Jesus as my Redeemer will render death joyful, for to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord; and what has the earth to keep me from him whom my soul loves and worships? Let the whole universe exhaust its treasures to charm and detain me here, my inmost heart exclaims, Better, far better to depart and be with Christ. And until that hour shall come, the assurance that I am his can cause me to toil

on and suffer on ; welcoming pain and sacrifice for this adorable Being who loved me and gave himself for me ; living to him and for him ; in whom and from whom alone I can live at all.

May this life be ours. May each of us be enabled to say, "I am crucified with Christ ; nevertheless I live ; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." "I am dead, and my life is hid with Christ in God ; when Christ who is my life shall appear, then shall I also appear with him in glory." As the mariner on the open sea beholds star after star come forth to light him on his trackless path, until he hails the crimson splendors which warm the air and dispel the surrounding gloom ;—so may we look up, and our longing souls be cheered by those glories which stand disclosed to faith, until the day shall dawn and the day star shall arise, until night shall melt into twilight, and twilight into morning—the morning of a long, long cloudless day, whose sun shall never set,—or rather which shall not need the sun, for the Lord God shall lighten it, and the Lamb shall be the light thereof.



Sermon Seventh.

THE JUDGMENT.

[FIRST SERMON ON THE TEXT.]

“FOR the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son.” “And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of Man.”—JOHN V: 22, 27.

OBERVE, my brethren, the position which in this entire chapter the Saviour easily and at once assumes. He is our model of humility and condescension; “I am meek and lowly in heart;” yet in the context he asserts for himself a dignity immeasurably above that of any created being. We would revolt at the impiety, if these attributes of Deity had been arrogated by Paul or John. In fact the Jews sought to kill him because he “made himself equal with God.” (v. 8).*

But while he thought it no robbery to be equal with God, he, as “Son of Man,” is not only human, but more human than any individual of our race can be; he is the normal man in whom the race is summed up and represented. And it is this central character, this affiliation with our common nature, which qualifies him to be our judge. “As the Father has life in himself, so hath

*In reply to the stale sophistry that Trinitarians believe in three Gods, it is unnecessary to go into any theological discussion; it is enough that they reject any such heresy. They may not be able (who is able?) to explain this “great mystery of godliness;” but when Jesus commanded baptism to be administered in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, he certainly did not teach tri-theism, and those who believe in the Trinity believe only in one God. Socinians know this, and therefore ought not to repeat this cavil.

he given to the Son to have life in himself, and hath given him authority to execute judgment also, *because he is the Son of Man.*”

I. Entering, without farther preface, into this important subject, I begin by remarking, with the best of the German commentators, that when Jesus speaks here of the judgment, he does not refer only—though, of course, he refers chiefly—to the last great assizes. “He that believeth not is condemned already.” The sentence of that awful day will be but a manifestation, an eternal confirmation, of the decisions which every man’s conduct is now attracting upon himself. And what I wish you first to observe is, that the authority to judge *now* is a mysterious power exercised by Jesus as the Son of Man, and “because he is the Son of Man.”

This may surprise you. Everywhere in the Scriptures God is declared to be the “judge of all the earth;” and the execution of this office is so manifestly a divine prerogative, requiring divine attributes, that we would expect to find this authority ascribed to Christ because he is the Son of God. The text informs us, however, that he is constituted judge because he is invested with humanity. A truth this, which deserves our close attention.

The prophets could address only the ear; but no sooner is the Son incarnate, than it is announced that he would be a new living, moral, judicial power, searching the inmost secrets of men’s bosoms, and discovering their characters. “Behold this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be spoken against, *that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.*” Wherever this novel and wonderful Presence shall come in contact with men, a test will be applied, unwelcome, repulsive to their pride and corruption, for it shall pierce through all concealments, and judge and try their most hidden thoughts and feelings.

Such was the remarkable prediction, and in the entire life and ministry of the Redeemer we find its fulfillment. Open any one of the Gospels, and what immediately

strikes you? It is that One Being hath stood upon this earth, who was not only so wonderfully allied to Deity that he could familiarly address God as his Father, but was *the catholic man*, so bound to humanity by occult and interlacing affinities that all—humble and noble—rich and poor—virtuous and vicious—felt and confessed his inscrutable potency over them. To the eye of sense he was an obscure, uneducated Hebrew youth; yet the very first tones of his voice thrilled the heart of humanity to its very core. He commenced his ministry in villages, but was often in Jerusalem, and soon traversed Judea; and everywhere those he addressed were compelled to acknowledge that they were listening to one who spake not only of but from eternity. “He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.” His words fell upon them with strange irresistible power, not because he used the style of the philosophers or orators, but because he uttered truths which at once convicted, commanded, controlled. It was known that he was unlettered; yet at the age of twelve the most learned and venerable doctors listened to him with astonishment. His original, deep, searching addresses shook their minds, consciences, hearts, and caused the multitudes to exclaim, “Whence hath this man this wisdom?” And on a memorable occasion, when a deputation was sent by the sanhedrim to arrest him, you remember what took place. The officers no sooner come into his presence than they are themselves arrested and disarmed; their gaze is at once riveted upon that mysterious form; their ears drink in with amazement the wonderful words which flow all meltingly and burningly from his lips, and they go back, not with their captive, but themselves captive to his imperial sway.

The writ commanded them to take him. The return to that process was one without a precedent, wholly unknown to the books of criminal practice, unheard of before or since in the proceedings of courts and the conduct of bailiffs and sheriffs. They do not say, He cannot be found, or, He has been rescued or defended by violence. Upon the instrument were endorsed only these words, “Never man spake like this man.”

“That his words were with power,” all felt; and, beyond a doubt, there was an unearthly, subduing majesty in his air,—in that countenance which caused even demoniacs to fall down at his feet—in the voice which stilled the tempest—in the eye which melted Peter’s inmost soul. But, apart from all this, no one can glance at the spiritual doctrines uttered by Jesus, and which came from his mind as their original source, without feeling that the Living Word was among men, that Word which is the manifestation of eternal truth, the “true light” searching and exposing every hidden thing.

Just observe, in the first place, how he holds the mirror up to the nation in which he lived, and reveals it to itself in all its deformity. Jesus appeared in an age of great moral degeneracy and corruption. Vice and depravity contaminated all classes of society. Selfishness, pride, ambition, covetousness, reigned everywhere; while humility, purity, forgiveness, charity and other noble virtues were almost unknown. With a fidelity and firmness which nothing could conquer; with an authority springing from conscious superiority to the world and perfect unimpeachable holiness, Jesus exposed the true character of the age. Not only was humanity utterly debased, but its conscience was stupefied. He awoke that conscience, he became himself that conscience, “he was the true light enlightening every man.” The nation instinctively felt—as nations now feel—that he had authority to execute judgment upon its utter degradation. And he was still more severe and awful in denouncing the religious corruptions and hypocrisy of the day. The Scribes and Pharisees arrogated great sanctity, and so imposed upon the masses by this exterior saintliness that all did them homage. Jesus stood alone in his bold, consuming condemnation of these pretenders. While the people were admiring the outward whiteness of these purists, he exposed their inward hollowness and rottenness. Nor did he only cause these impostors to feel their personal hypocrisy. The established religion was a wretched system of dead formulas, of lifeless, fossil semblances; he denounced it with an authoritative-

ness which inspired awe, which at once shook the magnificent temple, the gorgeous altars, and all the deep foundations of that venerable superstition.

Then, in the next place, see how he deals with sin. Before his day moral teachers had delivered vague essays about virtue and vice. In his teachings the evil of sin is first clearly proclaimed. He required the internal, spiritual reign of God; and the malignity of sin, as rebellion against God, he constantly denounced. Sin—not poverty, nor disease, nor affliction—was, with him, the dire curse of humanity; and all were defiled with sin. Nor could any withstand the convictions which his presence sent home to their consciences. Never was guilty man treated with such tenderness and compassion. Himself the essential purity, and revealing in his discourses a standard of holiness to which we still look up and feel its heavenly origin and glory—he yet mingled as a brother with those whom the world walled off from its intercourse; so that his enemies opprobriously styled him “the friend of publicans and sinners.” By this sympathy he reclaimed the vilest from that sense of general contempt which makes a man desperate, from that self-contempt which is more fatal still; and inspired some of that self-respect and confidence without which the fallen are hopelessly lost.

But—while he was thus compassionate to the lost, and sought with intense solicitude to save them—never was sin made to appear so exceeding sinful as when it stood in his presence, and was rebuked by his calm, yet awful severity. “The law came by Moses, but grace and truth by Jesus Christ.” Not grace only, but grace and truth; grace which pitied, attracted, softened, sanctified, saved; but truth which pervaded, laid bare the inmost recesses of the heart, bringing to light the hidden corruptions there, forcing the conscience to hear the voice of One who had authority to judge, and thus doing what the law could not do. It is to me very wonderful to observe how all flocked about this mysterious Being; and yet how his approach caused the most virtuous to exclaim, “Depart from us for we are sinful men.” As Son of Man, representing our common humanity, the

fibres of his universal love and sympathy "drew all men unto him." But in him humanity was immaculate, the incarnation of divine holiness. And, thus, while it attracted all to him, there went forth from him emanations of truth and purity which flashed directly into every man's conscience, setting his secret sins in the light of God's countenance, causing him to tremble in the consciousness that all things were naked and open to the eyes of him with whom he had to do.

This fearfulness of sin which Jesus first announced is not, in his estimate, owing to any or all of its outward consequences; it is its blight and curse upon the soul. And in his revelation of the soul we find another element of judicial power in the Son of Man. Now, when man's spiritual nature has been clearly revealed, it is a truth which all confess; but when the Saviour appeared this sublime verity was almost lost. Feeble voices, dim echoes would sometimes rise up from the depths of humanity, giving inarticulate admonitions of a spiritual and immortal essence; their faint murmurs were, however, soon drowned in the clamors of the senses and passions. Next to the knowledge of God, the greatest boon which can be conferred upon man, is the knowledge of himself. Jesus bestowed this gift; he revealed the soul; and, in thus opening within man the consciousness of a spiritual existence, he brought him at once to a sense of responsibility, of accountability after death, of capacities for infinite and eternal happiness or misery. Human tribunals—dungeons—chains—racks—scaffolds flames—he taught men to despise, when they were arrayed against truth; they could not reach the soul; and death would emancipate that soul from the fiercest malice of earth. But who could rescue the soul from that tremendous Judge into whose hands death would deliver it?

These solemn appeals, warnings, entreaties invested the Redeemer with a power over men against which they vainly strove to fortify themselves. When he uttered that portentous question, "What will it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" all were speechless; for the enquiry found its prompt and appalling

answer in every man's own bosom. And it was "because he was the Son of Man," that Jesus dealt thus directly and really with the soul. So dismal and ghastly a phenomenon is a race of spiritual immortal beings sunk into oblivion of their dignity and glory—imbruting themselves in their senses—and passing to everlasting perdition—that it requires no effort of imagination to suppose some spirit in a better world anxious to hasten from his sphere, that in accents of love and indignation he might expostulate and plead with men against this monstrous infatuation and guilt. But an angel could only stand apart arguing with a race too blind and sensual to heed his words. The Son of Man identified himself with this race. He not only "came into the world," but he entered into our humanity; thus gaining access to its heart, that from the core his words might vibrate through all our natures. He took into communion with deity a human soul as well as a human body. And, as all souls belong to the same family, he thus put himself in communication with man, not only by words addressed to the outward ear, but by affinities and sympathies which were spiritual, which would strike congenial chords and awaken responsive echoes.

In dealing with mankind, Jesus appealed from his own consciousness directly to the consciousness of humanity. It was this communion with our nature which qualified him to be a merciful High Priest, touched with the feeling of our infirmities, shedding ineffable consolation into the contrite soul. But this identification gave resistless authority and unspeakable terror to his condemnation of the impenitent. We all know that the soul is endowed with an internal sense, which Jesus calls "the light within us;" and which informs every man distinctly what is his true character. To this inward witness the Saviour constantly addressed himself; and—while consoling the penitent—with what a mysterious power did he expose dissimulation and hypocrisy, compelling them to become their own judges and executioners. Stainless purity himself, yet the ruined woman who falls abashed at his feet, her tears streaming through those pale fingers with which she seeks to hide her blushing face—is made to

feel for the first time that she has one true friend ; that she is not utterly lost. But her Pharisaical accusers quail as their own sins begin to find them out, and hasten to escape from a judge whose few words arrayed all their hidden crimes against them, unmasked their duplicity, and smote them to the quick with shame and confusion. "And they which heard it, being convicted by their own consciences, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest even unto the last." Omniscience alone can discern the facts which are within the consciousness of all men ; but Jesus "knew all men," "he knew what was in man." It is several times declared that he "knew the thoughts of those who came to him, and a single word, a look from him could and did anticipate "that hour, when God shall judge the secrets of men's hearts, by Jesus Christ."

You see, then, that, while the Son of Man was the impersonation of love and sympathy, the holiness of God was so incarnate in him, that it everywhere extorted a sense of guilt. He had authority to execute judgment because he was the Son of Man. And he exercises the same authority still. This truth is to me the more wonderful the more I reflect upon it, that Christ's life and ministry were so brief, that he composed no volumes to preserve and transmit his doctrines ; and, yet, that—while the influence of other teachers has passed away and they are forgotten, or known only through history—he still lives, the world daily hears his voice, humanity still feels his spiritual presence and judicial power. Wherever the Gospel is preached, there is a criterion which immediately puts men's characters upon trial. The prophecy is now constantly fulfilling which declared that, by the mysterious incarnation of Bethlehem, the thoughts of men's hearts should be revealed. At this hour—as distinctly as when he moved visibly among men—this earth confesses the jurisdiction of Him who has authority to execute judgment because he is the Son of Man.

I am anxious, my friends, to press upon you this solemn thought, that now, each day and hour, judgment is going on upon each of us ; for it is not the certainty, but the nearness of an event which rouses and alarms us.

It has got to be a proverb, that all men live as if they were never to die, yet death is of all things the most inevitable. And so, nobody doubts a judgment to come, but upon whose hearts and lives does this awful truth exert any practical influence? "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house." He regarded the flood as every day at hand; but who imitates that patriarch now, when God warns us of so tremendous a day? The fact is that, our very familiarity with the doctrine of a judgment after death has divested it of its power to move us. As Paul reasoned on this fearful theme, Felix, a heathen, trembled; while Drusilla sat at his side in cold indifference to the muttering thunders of the wrath to come. And the explanation of this strange spectacle is found, not only in the truth that wherever woman falls she becomes more hardened than man, but in the fact, that Drusilla was a Jewess, and accustomed to hear of that dreadful tribunal. I have, therefore, wished to remind you of a present judgment, as to which, perhaps, you have not often been admonished; of a judgment you are every hour passing upon yourselves, of issues which you are preparing now.

II. While, however, it is certain that the text alludes to the judgment passed in this life, its chief reference is to the judgment after death. You cannot be too tremblingly conscious that you are now making up the records. But the thought which lends awful solemnity to this consciousness, is the hour when these records shall be finally reviewed; it is the great and terrible day of the Lord, which shall yet burst in fire and vengeance upon this guilty world, when the great white throne shall be spread, and every man shall be judged out of the open books.

What can I say to you of that day? A day of which we have abundant premonitions. "Ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief." "God hath given assurance to all men that he will judge the earth;" assurance in the disorders all around us, which must be adjusted, if the Judge of all the earth

does right—in the oppression, cruelty, tyranny—in those horrid crimes the authors of which are never detected—in the vices which human laws do not reach—in the acts of fraud and violence which evade all law—in the hypocrisy which gratifies the vilest passions under the cloak of religion—and in the rapacity which rifles the widow and orphan and battens on their spoils; assurance in the consciences of men—all carrying within them the conviction of sin, and feeling that conscious guilt is prophetic of a future judgment; assurance full, explicit, in the revelation which has been given us—not only in detached passages, but in the entire scope and tone of the Bible, in all its doctrines, threats, precepts, promises.

A day on which sin shall be seen in its true character. Men make a mock at sin now, but then they will stand aghast at its malignity. Everywhere I see intelligible symptoms of God's estimate of sin. Earthquakes, pestilences, famines, pangs of conscience, cries of anguish, diseases wasting our frames, cruel strokes desolating our families, graves yawning beneath our feet—so many tokens these of God's hatred of sin. But all these are only faint preludes of wrath. In a burning, blazing world behold the unsearchable atrocity of sin!—in fiery floods deluging this planet, in the dissolving elements, in the heavens shriveled like a scroll. The house defiled with the fretting leprosy was to be taken down, every timber and brick. The garment stained with spreading leprosy was to be burned. And this earth, touched, polluted by sin, must be dismantled, must be purged by devouring flames, which the resentments of eternal justice shall kindle.

In that day, amidst the awful pomp and equipage of that tribunal, in what majesty will the Son of Man be revealed. Vainly do the Scriptures ascribe to Jesus all the attributes and prerogatives of deity; men still seek to strike the crown from his head. But before that august audience their folly and impiety will stand rebuked.—“When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him;” when “he shall sit upon the throne of his glory;” when “before him shall be gathered all nations;” when “he shall judge the secrets of all

hearts;" when "he shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and kingdom;" when the sovereign voice which called all things into being by a word, shall, by a word, command the heavens and the earth to pass away, and shall decide the destiny of the righteous and the wicked; then, then, none will dispute his royalty; every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess the celestial glory of the King immortal and eternal.

In the disclosures of that day every man shall see, not only his Judge, but another being, the knowledge of whom he had shunned with the most perverse dexterity. We now desire, not an enlightened but a quiet conscience. People say, they are seeking salvation, when they are only seeking to lull themselves. The hour is coming when our true character shall be made manifest. "We must all *appear* before the judgment seat of Christ;" *appear* as we really are—such is the meaning of the word. We must, not only be present, but have our inmost souls brought to light.

In short, the passions and the idols of those passions, salvation and the grandeurs of salvation—study these in the light of the final Judgment. The world and the things of the world which now charm and intoxicate us, what are they? only a stupendous magazine of fuel. "All these things must be dissolved," "shall be burned up," must become a funeral pile, a vast pyral conflagration. But the salvation of the Gospel, how glorious will it then be; filling the believer with transports amidst the convulsions of expiring nature; inspiring ineffable tranquillity while the heavens are lined with flaming cherubim; causing him to exult and triumph when surrounded by the fires which, like a red winding sheet, wrap a universe and bury it in ruins. The entire French nation worshiped Louis the Fourteenth, styling him "the Great." At his funeral the "Holy Chapel" was crowded with nobles and princes who all wept aloud when Massillon, placing his hand upon the royal coffin, exclaimed, "My brethren, God alone is great, and great especially when he presides over a scene like this." Soon, my friends, soon you and I shall be present at a far more imposing spectacle; at the obsequies, not of a king, but of a world.

And then, before such a catastrophe—at such a funeral—with the sun blackened as sackcloth of hair, and the moon changed into blood, and the stars falling from heaven, and the powers of the heaven shaken, and the heavens passing away with a great noise, and the elements melting with fervent heat, and the earth consumed and all that is therein—then, O then, how contemptible will all human greatness appear. There, there, how will everything preach to us of the grandeur of Jesus and of redemption in Jesus.

Winds, storms, tempests, thunders, lightnings, raging flames, dissolving elements, the archangel's trump smiting the silence of the tomb, the universal air blazing with disastrous splendors, "the tribes of the earth mourning and beating their breasts," the wicked "calling on mountains and hills to fall upon them and cover them, the shouts of the saved, the howlings of the damned—all, all will then utter once voice, all will pierce our very souls with their tones; all will repeat these words, God alone is great, and God's salvation alone deserved the cares, toils, sacrifices of an immortal spirit.



Sermon Eighth.

THE JUDGMENT.

[SECOND SERMON ON THE TEXT.]

“FOR the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son.” “And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of Man.”—JOHN V: 22, 27.

THAT there is a judgment now taking place, and one day to be consummated; of this I have attempted to speak in our former discourse. But of what avail will it be thus to warn you, unless you know what, under the Gospel, is the issue, the single issue in this judgment? Hear me then upon this point. And as the great assizes will only sum up and confirm the decisions which are now every day passed upon us, I will confine myself to the general judgment after death.

Now in examining this eternally momentous subject, remark, I beg you, how very emphatic the Scriptures are in admonishing us, that it is to be the Son of Man who is to be the judge of all the earth; and that the inquest at the last day will have reference exclusively to him.— Upon this matter people entertain I know not what vague unchristian notions. They think and speak as if the question hereafter would turn upon men's conduct under the law. But if this were to be the enquiry, how could a single child of Adam prepare to meet his God? If the verdict is to be decided by our obedience or disobedience to the law, it were worse than vain for me to stand here reasoning with you of a judgment to come; our sermons could be only prophecies of terror against which no heart could bear up. For as to any hope that God will not enforce his law, no one can

cherish this without impiety; and the more earnestly we seek perfection by the works of the law, the more must we be overwhelmed by a "certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation."

It is a great advantage that upon such a point we are left in no uncertainty; the Judge himself having drawn up a brief for us—thus putting into our hands a written copy of every count in the indictment, upon which we are to be arraigned. This protocol we have in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew's Gospel. And I ask you to weigh every word while I read it.

"When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory, and before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats; and he shall set the sheep upon the right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was a hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty and ye gave me drink, I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee a hungered and fed thee? or thirsty and gave thee drink? when saw we thee a stranger and took thee in? or naked and clothed thee? or when saw we thee sick, or in prison and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Then shall he also say unto them on his left hand, Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was a hungered, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee a hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick and in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal."

Here you have the articles of impeachment, and the whole programme of the trial. I know it has been usual to regard this language of Jesus, as simply inculcating benevolence; and surely such an appeal ought to be irresistible. Were I preaching a charity sermon, I could certainly desire no better vantage ground from which to ply the heart and conscience of the Christian. Look at this beggar who stands at your door; enter that dungeon and sit beside the prisoner whom persecution and tyranny have entombed there; come into this filthy lane, into this damp dark cellar, and see that man wasted by penury and disease. Who is this beggar? Who this prisoner? who this wretched victim of poverty and sickness? Suppose, in that starving pauper you were to discover an old fellow-soldier who had stood shoulder to shoulder with you when battling for your country, and had sheltered you from death; suppose, in that pining captive, or in that emaciated form shrinking into a sordid hut, pierced by wintry winds and parched by fever, you recognized your brother, your father, your own son; would not your soul melt in tenderness and compassion? would not your heart yearn and your eyes swim with tears, and all your nature leap forward in prompt cheerful ministries of love and devotion? Ah, Christian, listen to your Saviour. That beggar is more to you than an old companion in arms who covered your head in the day of battle; the inmate of that gloomy dungeon, that prostrate drooping sufferer, is nearer to you than brother, or father, or child; that beggar is bound to you by spiritual ties; that prisoner, that sufferer is identified with your Redeemer; he is the representative of your Redeemer; he is one with that Redeemer who loved you and died for you, who is to you the chiefest among ten thousand and altogether lovely, more precious than the dearest earthly object.

It would, however, be a very inadequate construction of this remarkable passage, thus to limit our interpretation of its import. If Jesus here teaches charity, it is only by indirection. His immediate object is to furnish the tests which shall be applied to our characters in the day of Judgment. And, now, the more carefully you

examine his words, the more clearly will you perceive how thorough the criterion ; and, also, how entirely this criterion has reference to the Son of Man. Examine each of these thoughts; for, indeed, they deserve your closest attention.

I have said that the tests enumerated by Jesus are thorough, and the truth of this assertion you must at once feel. For observe, in the first place, how universal is this ordeal. Hunger, thirst, nakedness, sickness, desolateness, imprisonment—here are all the aspects of human misery as far as man can inflict it upon his fellow man. I say nothing of inward peace, for persecution cannot reach that; nor of death, for that is a release from the troubles of the wicked; but a little reflection will shew you that these six gloomy circles compass and comprehend the whole sphere in which oppression or cruelty can have power to afflict us. And what Jesus declares is, that, in his church, his cause, his truth, he is still upon the earth, where all who are faithful to him must pass through some of these stern ordeals. A Christian identifies himself with Jesus, and chooses rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures and honors of this world. Faith will keep the real Christian loyal to Jesus, no matter what he may have to endure. And at the Judgment the one enquiry will be as to this loyalty. The tests here grouped together are thorough, then, because wherever the Gospel goes, they will put to the proof all professions of love for the Saviour.

And these tests are thorough, too, because they are entirely practical. What did you suffer? What were you willing to sacrifice for Jesus and his truth? this is the only question. Upon searching the presentments supplied by the Judge, I find not one word about matters which have rent the church and deluged the earth with blood. The true church, the apostolic ministry, the sacramental virtues—O, how has society been cursed, how have families been embittered and hearts empoisoned—how has communion been arrayed against communion, and preacher against preacher, by polemical strife and intolerance about theological subtilities. What envy

hatred, malice, uncharitableness; what pride, insolence, arrogance; what fierce resentment, and mutual anathemas,—and all about what? about so much abstruse metaphysical jargon. In the programme which the Judge has given there is no sort of allusion to these things.—Nor is there any inquisition into the abstract niceties of faith; for there the simple unlearned disciple would be silenced, and profound scholiasts, doctors and hierophants would claim academical honors. Nor is the enquiry about frames and feelings and fervors, for then flaming enthusiasts would carry everything by their inward raptures and rhapsodies. What did you endure?—what did you stand ready to endure for Christ and his cause? this will be the only enquiry. It is a test wholly practical. And as adversity is the touchstone of friendship—our misfortunes revealing what our friends are to us, while our prosperity shows what we are to them—as “a friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity,” the real state of the heart will be probed and sifted by these austere trials; there will be no possible plea or subterfuge or evasion.

You see, then, the thoroughness of the ordeal to which all will be subjected at the Judgment. Now look at the other character of this ordeal, and mark how entirely it has reference to the Son of Man, how exclusively the whole procedure will be under the Gospel. It is, indeed, only when we bear this great truth in mind, that we can explain the contrasted emotions of the two parties (for there will be only two) before that awful judgment throne.

Looking into the prophetic record just now unfolded, we find those on the left hand overwhelmed with disappointment and dismay; and why? Because, as I have said, the issue to be tried is altogether evangelical and, therefore no account whatever is taken of all upon which they had prided themselves and made sure of heaven.—To understand the force of the manifesto now before us, you must remember, that those who vainly attempt to make out a case, are not the vicious and dishonest, but the upright and honorable. Such men, while unconverted, are always filled with self-complacency, and

pique themselves upon their integrity, their virtues, their good deeds, and acts of benevolence. But the Judge rules out all these pleas and suggestions, as wholly irrelevant; and regarding them with a stern eye, requires them to answer an indictment every count of which charges them with unbelief in him, with disobedience to him, with disloyalty to him, with the rejection of his sovereignty and the dishonor of his royalty. This it is which smites their very souls with confusion and consternation;—this, that their stainless honor and high-toned sentiments and various accomplishments and amiabilities all pass for nothing, since they stand convicted of contempt, rebellion, high treason against the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

Men and brethren, hear me on this great theme; a theme so constantly pressed upon you, and yet as to which you seem resolved to remain wilfully blind. The Gospel is the only overture which insulted heaven makes, or will ever make, to guilty man; and salvation through faith in Jesus is the only hope known in the Gospel. Wherever this Gospel is preached there are two parties; those who are with Christ, and those who are against him. Middle ground there can be none; for the Judge has said, "He that is not with me, is against me." Those who receive Christ will be saved entirely through his atonement. "There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." "He that believeth on him is not condemned." But those who are not in Christ must perish. "He that believeth not is condemned already." I honor and admire in many who are not Christians, virtues which adorn public life and shed a mild and winning lustre over the domestic circle; but love for Jesus is no more an element in their excellences than in their sins. Their virtues are as constant in dishonoring him as their vices; their tears only nourish delusive hopes. Under the law man is ruined and undone. We are not now under the legal, but the Gospel constitution in the economy of which, all hope, all virtue, all holiness, all salvation are comprehended in loyalty to the Redeemer. The whole of life is an experiment of this loyalty. At the Judgment this loyalty will be the only

subject of investigation ; and justly will the Son of Man reject those who rejected him. On every page of the New Testament unbelief in Jesus is the great, essential, crowning, damning sin ; and with reason ; for it insults the Father who gave his Son to die for man ; it despises the Holy Spirit whose office it is to " glorify " this Son ; and it pours contempt upon the love and mercy and majesty of that Son. Those on the left of the tribunal must, then, awake to shame and everlasting contempt, when they stand convicted of this comprehensive and aggravated guilt,—in extenuation or mitigation of which it is just nothing to set up a plea of natural amiability and justice and generosity.

This willful ignorance of themselves, and of the economy under which they are placed, causes men to resemble the pharisee described by Jesus ; who urged his scrupulous performances, not only as a ground for pardon, but as possessing merit before God. In that parable it is not denied that the boaster who paraded his worth in the temple, really made a fair exhibit. In fact, he did not pitch his morality very high, and could appeal to heaven for his sincerity. He is condemned because he urges his services as a claim against God. And just so here in the Saviour's account of the Judgment, there is against those on the left hand no imputation of falsehood in arrogating virtues they did not possess. They had discharged offices of clemency and benevolence, but here was the great mistake ; because these actions are meritorious with men, they believed them to be meritorious with God. This perverse blindness will be at once dissipated at the Judgment ; when they will see—what we vainly repeat again and again now—that merit lays God under obligation, impossible in any creature, impossible in the holiest angel, and the very thought of it, therefore, an impious presumption in guilty fallen man.

" *Ye did it not unto me.*" Whatever they do, Jesus is not the object of their service and allegiance ; this is the condemnation of the men of the world now, this will cause them to stand speechless at the Judgment and will seal their doom forever. All this you readily understand ; but you may not so easily comprehend the answer of those

on the right hand. They, too, exclaim, "Lord when?" "Lord where?"—and how is this to be explained? The same great truth which I have just indicated at once resolves all difficulty here, and interprets these earnest depreciations and deprecations. The salvation of the Gospel is entirely by faith, a faith which renounces all merit in human works and reposes upon the atonement. This is the only ground upon which a Christian can consent to be saved. When, then, they hear their services applauded, the redeemed are filled with ingenuous confusion; and at once disclaim honors not due to them, but to him who called them and sustained them by his grace.

Good works. Yes, during life they had been "careful to maintain good works;" but who was the author and finisher of that faith by which these works were wrought? Who worked in them to will and to do of his own good pleasure? Not one of them but had exclaimed, over and over, in all his trials and triumphs, "By the grace of God, I am, what I am." "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."

Good works. Yes, their faith did vindicate its sincerity by works, but what works? Such motives, such a debt of gratitude, so many opportunities, yet so little done!—so much forgiven, yet so little love and devotion!—ah, if forever banished, it would be strictly just; but to be commended for fidelity; to have the Judge say, "Well done good and faithful servants"—this humbles them and they stand abashed by conscious unworthiness.

Above all, Him! Jesus! My beloved brethren, when we shall see him seated upon the throne of his glory, encircled by the homage of adoring angels, we will comprehend, as we cannot now, all the love and condescension which stooped to our ruined humanity, and welcomed the cross and the shame for us. And then—if life had been protracted to the years of Methusaleh, and if the whole of that life had been one long stern martyrdom, we would abhor the thought that any return had been made for such amazing mercy. Then we will exclaim—with utter, unutterable self-renunciation, self-annihilation—"Lord, when, where was anything done by

us worthy of thine approbation? No, thou, O Lord, art worthy to receive praise and honor and glory. Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor and glory and blessing. Not unto us, not unto us, but unto thy name be all the glory. Unto us belongeth shame and confusion of face. Unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen."

"The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son!" "And hath given him authority to execute judgment also because he is the Son of Man." My friends, this is a truth of the deepest interest to us all. It is the future which makes man great.—God's dealings with us, the economy of his providence and grace can only be explained by the fact, that we are fallen yet immortal spirits. Mortified and humbled by the sense of our vileness and ignorance here, there is yet something within us which awakens the noblest aspirations and anticipations reaching into eternity; and our destiny in eternity we are every hour determining, by our conduct towards that Being who will judge us, who is now judging us.

"The Son of Man," these words are full of meaning. Jesus delighted in this title because it proclaimed his identity with sinless humanity. How intensely human were his love, his tenderness, his pity, his heart, his life, his death; and it is this perfect manhood with which we have to do in salvation. "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." When Jesus came forth, wearing the purple robe and the crown of thorns, Pilate said, "Behold the man!" In that mysterious sufferer let us behold the Man, the generic, central, normal Man; and this Man, the Saviour and Judge. His affinity with our common humanity qualifies him to be "the Saviour of all men;" for his sympathy is universal. And this sympathy is, at the same time, intensely individual, so that he is the brother of every particular man. Hence the Gospel is not only a catholicon, but a specific; not only "the power of God unto salvation,"

but "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."

This Son of Man, this sacred Incarnation of Love, this essential perfect representative Man—so divine that he is one with the Father, and yet so human that he "sticks closer," is more intimately and tenderly bound to us, "than a brother"—this mysterious Being is our Judge.

My impenitent hearers, how are you affected by this thought? When I urge upon you the justice, holiness and love of God, I may seem to you to be dealing with abstractions, and you may not be reached; but in speaking of the love and mercy of Jesus, of his condescension and wonderful self-sacrifice, I come home to your bosoms as men. I appeal to every grateful, noble, generous principle in your nature. If you will receive him, there is every encouragement and assurance. For he knows your frame, he remembers that you are but dust; and he invites you to come to him just as you are. He recollects his own sore temptations, and will in no wise cast you out, but will pardon all the past, and give you grace for all the future. If, however, you persist in your course, it is the truth just mentioned which will overwhelm you at the Judgment;—this, that you rejected such a friend. Here is human love, and human love enduring such sorrow, welcoming such a cross, despising such shame for you; yet you spurn all this devotion.

In that awful day, it will be no invisible God mysteriously visiting the earth to execute judgment, it will be the Son of Man, it will be Jesus. You will then see that you trampled under foot a brother's heart; and anguish will wring your very soul, when you behold that face which was so often bathed in tears, that head once pierced by a crown all thorns, those hands and feet once lacerated by nails, that form which was suspended on the cross; and when you remember that all this accumulated contempt and wretchedness he longed for and bore, a willing, uncomplaining sufferer, for his deep devotion to you; and yet that you hated him, and chose to perish rather than accept his earnest overtures of reconciliation and friendship. It is this which will fill the lost with horror and dismay, that they slighted such endearing

affection, that in hardness and willfulness, they spurned a tenderness and loving kindness which angels forever admire. The earth a rocking globe of fire, the heavens a sheeted flame rolling away, the beating storms, the bellying peals, and all the fierce splendors of that day, will not be noticed; one object will absorb their guilty souls, and that object will be the Man upon the great white throne, "from whose face the earth and the heavens flee away." "And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains and the mighty men, and every bondman and every freeman, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us and hide us from the *face of him that sitteth upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb*; for the great day of his wrath is come and who shall be able to stand?"

Christians, my dearly beloved brethren, how consoling is this thought to you. The Judge will be your friend, your brother, the Redeemer who knows all your weakness, but knows that you love him, and who loves you with an everlasting love. How humanly he loved and pitied while he was upon earth; and he is "the same yesterday, to-day and forever." The same sympathizing High Priest who, from his own experience, now enters into all your temptations and sorrows, who now succors you in all your conflicts and trials, will then be robed in glory, will cover your defenceless head, will stretch out his arms to welcome you, will forever vindicate the truth of his promises and the efficacy of that atonement in which you confided. You may with joy anticipate the hour when the judgment shall be set and the books shall be opened; for you can say, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."

Enter, my beloved hearers, into these thoughts. It is a great thing that the Judge himself has furnished the programme of the judgment which is rushing on; let us study it carefully and prepare to meet our God. A little while and we shall all be blotted from this present life,

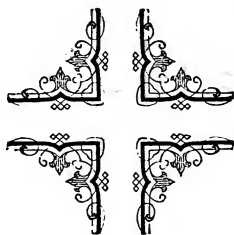
and who will miss us? Some time ago astronomers declared that a star had disappeared. Who mourned that lost Pleiad? Who looked up into the heavens and thought them less beautiful for that bereavement? But amid what scenes will the soul find itself when it passes from this earth? "It is appointed unto all men once to die, and after death the judgment;" it is the latter clause of this announcement which reflects terror upon the former; the judgment invests death with its awfulness. Let us meditate solemnly upon the certainty of that judgment.

We are all approaching that dread tribunal. However diversified our paths, they all converge toward that common centre. The young, with their elastic tread, are striding to the Judgment; the old, with their tottering limbs, are creeping to the Judgment; the rich in their splendid equipages are driving to the Judgment; the poor, in rags and barefooted, are walking to the Judgment. The Christian, making God's statutes his song, is a pilgrim to the Judgment; the sinner, treading upon the mercy of Jesus and trampling upon his blood, is hastening to the Judgment. "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ." Let this truth dwell in your mind.

And add another reflection. This judgment will soon be here for us. The last Sabbath on which we shall hear the word of God will soon come; the last sickness will soon come; the last look at our family weeping around our bed will soon come; and the dimming of our glazed eye, and the stopping of our frozen pulses, and the shroud and the coffin and the yawning grave, and the dread tribunal—all, all are ready; while I speak they are hurrying forward, and to-morrow they will overtake us.

Meanwhile, Jesus is seeking to save us; he is saying, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock." I, who am to be your Judge, am now your suitor. It is not with a sword to be dipped in your blood, but with the cross wetted with my blood, that I am beating at the door. The voice you hear is not that of anger, but of tender, beseeching love. Let me enter, he cries, for Death is coming, and he will not stand knocking, but will break right in.

Yes, my friend, the Son of Man has long been at the door of your mind, your conscience, your heart; he is now there, knocking, pleading, intreating. And as you comply or resist, you are with your own hand, writing a record which the retributions of the last day shall forever confirm. You are either amassing a far more exceeding and an eternal weight of glory; or, "after your hardness and impenitent heart, you are treasuring up unto yourself wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."



Sermon Ninth.

FORMER DAYS.

“SAY not thou, what is the cause that the former days were better than these? for thou dost not enquire wisely concerning this.”—ECCLES. vii: 10. “But call to remembrance the former days.”—HEB. x: 32.

HE who believes the Bible readily understands the illusiveness of life, and why we instinctively speak of our present occupations as pursuits, not as fruitions. It is the future which makes man great; and it is that grand future which casts a shadow over him here, touching his soul with I know not what sadness as he feels that he is not what he was made to be. But instead of lofty aspirations after another and higher sphere of happiness, we are prone to turn our eyes to the past, and to indulge in pensive reveries upon former days, as if they “were better than these.” We resemble passengers over a rough country who complain of the ruggedness they endure on each portion of the road which is under them, but to whom the same road seems smooth and carpeted with the softest verdure as they look back upon it; distance producing in imagination the effects of a real perspective,—rounding, mellowing objects, and converting what is harsh into tender hues and golden mists. In fact, we are, during the whole of our lives, under illusions similar to the fallacious appearances which deceive the pilgrim in Arabian deserts. Each tract, while beneath the caravan, is a waste of parched and burning sand; but no sooner has it been left far in the rear, than a miracle is wrought; the burning earth has been smitten by the wand of an enchanter, and a blue refreshing lake has gushed up from the ground. And far in advance, too, the same cool waters invite the weary traveller only to mock and deride him.

As to this unapproachable mirage in the future I do not say anything to-day. To be sure it would be almost a cruel satire on humanity if I should contrast the feelings of the young as, flushed and exultant, they set out for their promised land, with the stern experiences and sad confessions of advancing years. But hope is, after all, a most happy deception. In worldly, as in heavenly affairs, "we are saved by hope." It still allures us on.—Its beguilements keep us ever at work; and, O child of earth, man, woman, next to religion, bless God for work!

It is of the past I am going to speak, and I have put together as our text two verses which counsel us as to the past. Let us take up the first of these passages, which rebukes a very common folly, and admonishes us not to say, "What is the cause that the former days were better than these?"

I. To understand this advice, we must bear in mind that there is here no censure upon those regrets which naturally arise in our souls as we review our own unfaithfulness. The remote aspects of so many years which are gone; the changes in our families, in the circle of our friendships, in the economy of our own thoughts, views, feelings—these tell us how our sun is westering, how much of our little span is finished. During this period, had we but been faithful, had we wrought each day for worthy ends, how different now would be our characters, and how different, perhaps, the condition of those for whose salvation we would cheerfully lay down our lives. Ten, twenty, thirty years have rolled by since the duties and responsibilities of a spiritual, immortal being have devolved upon me; how mortifying the retrospect. In knowledge, usefulness, holiness, others have, during these very years, achieved the noblest victories. I need no self-examination to humble me under the consciousness of my deplorable perfidiousness. And all this in spite of convictions so clear and strong, that a voice from heaven could have added nothing to their energy; all this with eternity just there,—with everlasting glories burning before my vision.

Nor, again, is it unwise to explore the past, that we may discover the causes of any sad changes either in our

personal concerns or in the times which have come over us. If in our business we once prospered, but now all goes wrong; if in the country peace, love formerly prevailed, but at present an earthquake convulses the foundations of society and fraternal hate and carnage afflict and rend the nation; above all, if in other seasons the candle of the Lord shone upon us and we rejoiced in the blessedness of sweet close communion with Jesus, but now our souls are cold and dark;—in these and in similar cases it is our duty, our highest wisdom to examine the past that, detecting the causes of these calamities, we may apply the appropriate remedies.

What Solomon condemns is a very different spirit. It is a discontented, querulous disposition which—instead of recognizing God in all times and events, and giving thanks in everything—is constantly complaining and croaking over the present, and pretending that it has greatly degenerated from the past. And observe how he treats this propensity. He declares that it is simple, downright, unsophisticated folly;—a sentence which is abundantly justified in every view you can take of it.

To expose the true character of this temper it ought to be enough, that it is not peculiar to any period, but has been the chronic disease of all ages: In the writings of the oldest authors we find lamentations for some golden age of the past; but it is ever a legendary millennium hidden in the depths of a fabulous antiquity. And the golden age of every man and woman is only the romantic dream of a warm imagination. To me this is, indeed, one of the most striking evidences of the vanity of human life, that we are ever thus preferring the ideal to the real, constantly persuading ourselves that the past was better than the present, although when that past was present, it was the cause of the same repinings, the same invidious contrast with a portion of our lives still more remote. This spirit is universal. Let any one open his eyes and look about him, and he will confess that all his life he has been hearing only of degeneracy and decay, seeing only progress and improvement. In this view society presents a curious phenomenon; nations and individuals eagerly pressing

forward, impatient of the present, but as soon as that present has withdrawn and receded into the distance, recalling it with tender regrets. That this dissatisfaction with the present has its important uses no one denies; for without it there would be no advancement; and, moreover, the real beauty and glory of earthly things are never in their own completeness, but in their progression toward the higher, truer, nobler. But to murmur at this progression, to be ever giving the palm to former days, this is the height of folly and ingratitude; and it ought to disabuse our minds of this fallacy when we find that, in all ages, men have been repeating the same complaint.

A second proof of folly in this harping preference of the past is its falsehood. There may, there will come over the earth times of social, commercial, political, religious darkness and depression; but as Galileo said of this planet, so I say of the economy of human affairs, it moves on for all that. You stand upon the sea shore, and because wave after wave rushes up a little way, then breaks and recedes, you think the tide is on the ebb; but you are mistaken. Examine the steadily advancing lines marked by those waves, and you will discover that the sea is coming in, and with a power and majesty which mock to scorn the puny opposition of man.

“Antiquity deserveth this reverence,” says Lord Bacon, “that men should make a stand thereupon, and discover what is the best way; but when this discovery is well taken, then to make progression.” This reverence and no more. It deserves no precedence such as the bemoaners of Solomon’s day and those of our own would give it. These people are ever crying out about “the good old times;” but this adage really contains almost as many errors as words. In the first place it is a palpable falsehood to apply the term “old” to former days, as contrasted with these. The world is older today than it ever was before. If, then, homage be due to age, it must be rendered not to earlier, but to the present times. In the next place, we take up the whole thing

amiss, when we affirm that those days were good while these are bad. For if by "good" we mean to pay deference to the superior wisdom of those times as we do to that of aged men, why it is self-evident that each succeeding generation ought to be made wiser by the experience of the generations preceding. Or, if by "good" we mean more virtuous, neither philosophy nor history will support an appeal; they tell us that humanity has been always the same since the fall,—the same objects acting upon the same passions and producing the same fruits. In short, he alone can decide between the character of a former age and that of this, who has lived not only in each, but in each at the same time, so that the evils of both might be felt and compared as things actually present and pressing upon him;—a qualification plainly impossible.

That we may feel the practical truth of these assertions, let us apply them, for a moment to some of these complaints as to secular affairs which we are every day hearing. All around us honest men are declaiming against the times, as an age of selfishness, cunning, craft, dishonesty; but in trade and traffic when was it ever otherwise? "It is naught, it is naught, saith the buyer, but when he goeth his way then he boasteth." Solomon informs us that this was the practice under his reign; and our most unscrupulous sharpers have made no improvement on it. All the tricks, shiftings, turnings, windings, twistings of mercantile chicanery are comprehended in that description.

Those engaged in legitimate methods of sober commerce lift up their hands against the wild, reckless spirit of speculation now abroad. But in fact the most headlong gamblers amongst us are only tame copyists, feeble imitators of the fierce adventurers of other generations; of those, for example, who rioted in the excitement of the celebrated South Sea schemes; during which a perfect mania seized the public mind in London, causing a dense incongruous mass of human beings to crowd the streets from morning till night,—all impelled by the same delirious rage; churchmen and dissenters to forget their theological disputes; whigs and

tories to bury their political animosities; lawyers, physicians, merchants to neglect their professional pursuits; even ministers of the Gospel to forsake their sacred calling, and ladies of the highest rank and refinement to discard all delicacy and dignity, as they whirled along in the swollen torrent which swept them down till they sank together in the vortex of one common, promiscuous bankruptcy.

Old people shake their heads ominously as they descant upon the vanity and conceit of the young, who—they declare—are utterly wanting in reverence for years and experience, and affect to be wiser than their elders. But in all ages this has been the case; and when these old people were young, their fathers and mothers said the same thing of them. Indeed more than eighteen hundred years ago Pliny, speaking of young Rome, uses the very language now applied to young America. "*Statim sapiunt. Statim sciunt omnia. Neminem verentur. Imitantur neminem. Atque ipsi sibi sunt exempla.*"* "All at once they are perfect in wisdom. All at once they know everything. They reverence nobody. They imitate nobody. And each one is to himself the only example they condescend to follow."

Even as to the terrible tragedy now shaking the land, what, alas, are the records of the earth, but a history of civil tumults, conflicts, blood and havoc? "From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence even of your lusts that war in your members?" These strifes, contentions, butcheries, are to be traced to what they proceed from in humanity itself. To examine the circumstances which may happen to involve nations in hostility—to confine our thoughts to these, and not to recognize, as the great cause of such a hideous calamity, the selfishness and depravity of our nature, is to act like a man who, when a plague is raging, overlooks the pestilence, and enquires into the cause of each particular case of mortality.

Look where we will over this wide world, we find the earth covered with monuments, columns, obelisks, towers

*Plin. Jun., Liber 8, Epist. 23.

all raised to perpetuate the fame of battles and campaigns, to transmit the tale of cities sacked and burned, of fields drenched in gore and strewn with the forms of men lacerated, mutilated, massacred by each other. Nor will the dismal phenomenon ever cease, until the religion of Jesus shall everywhere triumph; for the Gospel alone can penetrate to the source of the evil, and quell the depraved passions of the heart. Meanwhile, that Gospel has so mitigated the horrors of this scourge, as to make the ruthless, savage cruelties of ancient warfare almost incredible to us; and as the successive eruptions of the volcano ultimately fertilize the soil, so the promises of God and the history of our earth console us with the assurance that even the convulsions which we deplore will prove to be blessings, will accomplish the great purposes of unerring wisdom, and unchanging love as to the future destinies of this nation and of the human race.

But I need not dwell longer upon this part of our subject. The text itself furnishes the most striking illustration of the inveterate folly I am seeking to expose; for it discloses the fact that under Solomon's reign there was the same unreflecting, short-sighted repining after the past. During the preceding years the calendar had been dark enough. The land bled at every pore under the tyranny of Saul, and the rebellions of Absalom and Sheba. On all sides were civil, commercial, political trouble and disorder. While Solomon was upon the throne Judah was the pride of the world, Jerusalem was the metropolis of the whole earth, the nation was blessed with the palmiest prosperity, the government was administered with consummate wisdom. Yet, "this folly was in Israel;" people were ever recalling the former days and saying, "What is the cause that they were happier than these?"

If from secular we pass to religious things, we encounter as to these the same prejudice. There lurks in our minds I know not what lodged, rooted idea, that the former days were happier, more auspicious than the present. But here, again, we do not enquire wisely.

The depravity of our nature, the universal diffusion of moral evil wherever human beings are found, the origin of this dismal phenomenon, and how it can be reconciled with the wisdom, holiness, power, love of God,—these are unspeakably profound and awful mysteries. A devout mind can comfort itself only with the certainty that this fearful fact, so utterly inscrutable to us, is yet a part of the moral machinery which is working out the grand designs and eternal counsels of Jehovah. But ever since the fall the same sinful nature has betrayed itself ominously in the actions of men. Carry your researches back to any age, explore the archives of every nation, the depravity of the race is impressed on the entire record in appalling distinctness; and in nothing does it betray its malignity so portentiously as in the perversion and corruption of the very scheme which God has revealed for our redemption.

When you give the precedence to some former age, and claim for it superiority as to the influence and power of the Gospel, I ought to request you to consider how such an assertion sounds from the lips of a Christian. You believe that Christ Jesus came into the world; and that, with him, there entered into humanity a new element to regenerate and elevate it. Are you willing to concede that this amazing enterprise has proved a failure? that the wisdom and power of God have been exhausted and have found sin too strong for them?

But, passing this, when, where, did other days have this pre-eminence? Sometimes these sighs over the present and for the past refer to the supposed purity of the church in apostolic times. On chasing this mirage back, however, to those days, what do we find but the same selfishness and corruption which are the burden of our complaints now. Indeed, in what part of the land can you shew me a body of professors of whom it can be said, that "All mind their own, not the things of Jesus Christ?" Where is the church which converts the Lord's supper into a bacchanalian feast, as they did at Corinth; or which retains in its fellowship a man known to be living in incest?

But the peace and harmony of the primitive churches; what a painful contrast between the unhappy period on which we have fallen, and those halcyon days, when brethren dwelt together in unity, and when the truth won its way with such little opposition. This is what you say; nor do I deny that there were short intervals of rest enjoyed by the first churches. They were, however, only respites, breathing spells. Seasons of protracted tranquillity were always periods of declension and apostasy. As to that enmity which the truth meets in the carnal mind, the world has ever been what it now is. If there has been a suspension of hostility it has ever been because the church was recreant to its sacred trust. Of the seven churches of Asia the only two not engaged in stern conflicts with persecution were those of Sardis and Laodicea; and they were the very churches most hopelessly sunk in error and corruption.—“Think not,” said the Redeemer, that I am come to send peace; I am come not to send peace, but a sword.” In every period only a comparatively small number have been truly loyal to God; and they have been hated, reviled, persecuted. In this view the fault-finding spirit in the text is plainly preposterous. And, then, as to internal dissensions, a very considerable portion of ecclesiastical history is a record of these. It is delightful to read the narrative of Pentecost, of the love and harmony which then pervaded the entire church. But this was the inauguration of the dispensation of the Holy Spirit in the plenitude of his gifts and graces. This manifestation, during which religion was the sole occupation of the converts, whether Jewish pilgrims, or residents in Jerusalem, continued only a few weeks. And very soon after this season had passed, we find everywhere the same dissensions which now agitate and disturb the churches.

But of all these religious illusions, the most common and plausible is that which ascribes to an earlier epoch spiritual advantages far superior to those we enjoy; whereas, the reverse is really the truth. No doubt miracles were a divine attestation of the Saviour's heavenly mission. We know, however, that the visible exhibition

of supernatural energies was more than counterbalanced by the rooted prejudices of the Jews as to their Messiah. Besides, the only effect of seeing miracles would be a conviction that they were wrought; but as to this we have testimony quite as conclusive as any ocular proof. For it would be absurd to pretend that we cannot be as sure of a fact upon the deposition of eye witnesses, as upon the evidence of our senses. In these respects, then, we are on a footing with the first disciples; but in others we have vast advantages. The credentials upon which our faith rests are cumulative. Century after century the Gospel has been tried and sifted; and the seal of truth has been set upon it. With increasing might and glory it has asserted, and is still asserting its majesty as the wisdom and power of God unto salvation.

I add only one other remark as to this carping, bewailing spirit, which is, that it can do no sort of good to any man or woman, but is a morbid, vicious disposition, causing the very evils it affects to deplore.

Suppose it to be true, that the former times were better than these, what efficacy is there in our complaints to produce any changes? Piety consists not in moping over the past, nor in repining that we are not in different circumstances, but in fidelity to our lot, in "forgetting the things that are behind and pressing toward the mark of our high calling." The great thing for each of us is our duty; and amidst all our blindness and weakness, it is the plainest thing, if we are willing to know it. Duty—deeds done for God—this only is real and permanent. The future soon becomes present, the present soon becomes past and is gone forever; but work performed for Jesus, this cannot pass away. "Work while it is called To-day." Do not brood over yesterday. Work to-day; and amidst your troubles, you will find work to be like the strokes of the swimmer, which not only prevent the ocean from drowning him, but cause that very ocean to bear him up and on his way.

Nor is this querulousness only unavailing; it is, as I have said, a sickly, selfish, vicious propensity against which we ought to guard ourselves. It is the whining of old people, who cannot bear to think that the world is

growing wiser and better without them. It is the cynical grumbling of bilious, dyspeptic people, who cannot endure that others should be happy without them, or with them. It aggravates the evils of every age and condition. The habitual recognition of a personal Deity ordering all things, and the instinctive acquiescence in his will—this is piety; this keeps the soul in perfect peace. But fretting and murmuring insult God, and render enjoyment impossible in any circumstances. This temper mars, if it does not wholly destroy our usefulness, as to which what makes one man superior to another is simply a present, earnest will. To-day is here, to-morrow is near at hand,—each bringing new and noble opportunities. How pitiful and sinful if, instead of improving them, we waste our lives in peevishly uttering invectives against the present and regrets for the past.

In a word, all this pensive sentimentalism—these wails and lamentations about the times—is simply so much folly and absurdity; for the fault is in us, not in the times. Strictly speaking, the times have inherent in them no quality whatever. They are what we make them.—And as in an assembly, he creates most noise who is continually crying, Silence! so those who are loudest about the times are often the very people who have done most to make the times what they are. The times are themselves perfectly harmless. The sun rises and sets now as it always did. Years roll on in one generation as in another. In one sense the times are in fact always good; since they always furnish occasions to glorify God, to break and trample under foot every chain of selfishness, to shed blessings on mankind, and to build ourselves up in moral, self-denying, sacred energy of soul. Let us cease, then, to ring changes and charges about the times, when the evils of which we complain are really in ourselves. “Say not thou. What is the cause that the former days were better than these? for thou dost not enquire wisely concerning this.”

II. You see, now, what is the temper which Solomon reproves, and why he rebukes it so sharply. I have insisted upon this article so long that I must be brief in dealing with the other text, which exhorts us to recall

the past, but to recall it in the spirit of wise, Christian reflection. To stir up their minds by way of remembrance, to replenish their faith, hope, love, courage, Moses again and again admonishes Israel to "ask of the former times"—frequently to review the way in which the Lord their God had led them. And this is the very design of the Holy Spirit in the passage now before us,—“Call to remembrance the former days.”

“The former days,”—that infinitely interesting and important time, when we came out from the world and gave ourselves to Jesus by a good profession before many witnesses. In our text the apostle refers directly to this period.

The Hebrews whom he addresses were in danger of apostasy—at least, of forgetting their high and glorious calling, of becoming faithless to their solemn vows. The apostle warns them of the consequences if they should fall away; and, to reanimate them and arm them against every temptation, he reminds them of the noble spirit with which they had embraced the truth, and of their heroic sacrifices and sufferings for it, “knowing that in heaven they had a better and an enduring substance.”

And what a touching, powerful argument is the appeal to such a record. When God would bring Jacob to cast away his idols and return to his first piety, he commands him to “arise and go up to Bethel.” And you recollect the effect upon the patriarch, as he revisited a scene which reminded him of his sore trouble, of the mercy which interposed for his deliverance, and of his solemn engagements. “Then Jacob said unto his household and to all that were with him, Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean and change your garments, and let us arise and go up to Bethel, and I will make there an altar unto God who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went.”

My brethren, such a summons comes to us this day.—Let us obey it. Let us arise and go up to Bethel. Our fears, convictions, prayers, distresses, the hope which sprang up in our hearts when Christ was revealed in us, the gratitude which glowed in our souls, the vows of love

and consecration we then made ;—let us recall these, and let the remembrance of them humble us in the dust for our perfidiousness, and rekindle a devotion whose ardors shall make some reparation for such forgetfulness and delinquency. “I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.” O, of what avail is it if the whole world applaud us, while Jesus says “*I have somewhat against thee ;*” and when this somewhat is, that our affection for him has grown cold.

“The former days ;”—the days of our affliction. The apostle refers to these, and God means us to have them in remembrance. The hours of disease and languishing, when our souls drew nigh to the grave, when, like Hezekiah, we turned our pale face to the wall, and cried unto the Lord, and he pitied and healed us; or when adversity fell upon us like a storm, wrecking our fortunes and sweeping away our plans and purposes; or when the sun went down on our homes and our hearts, when bereavement and anguish converted our dwellings into houses of mourning, in which, amid shivered joys and hopes, we shut ourselves up to weep and mourn in bitterness;—these afflictions came not out of the ground, they were the chastisements of that God who loves us, and they had their designs. We ought to review them that we may be corrected, may be weaned from the world, may repose unlimited confidence in the Redeemer whose grace then sustained and comforted us, may realize the uncertainty of all earthly happiness, and may have our treasure in heaven, our hearts habitually elevated to things unseen and eternal.

“The former days ;”—times of trial, conflict, discouragement, temptation. Did we oftener call these to remembrance, with how much more delight would we make the covert of God’s faithfulness our refuge, exclaiming, with the Psalmist, “Because thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice.”

It is of the last importance for us to recollect that grace is promised only as our day, that strength is accurately proportioned to our need. When under proper control, the love of accumulation is right enough as to worldly things ; but as to spiritual supplies it is forbidden. We

are to live upon Jesus hour by hour; and if we would let our experiences make us wise, they would teach us that we trust in One who never did, never will, never can disappoint us; who—as the apostle beautifully says, “hath delivered,” “doth deliver,” and “will yet deliver;” who has supported us when fainting, has lifted us up when fallen, has restored our souls when they have wandered from his paths, has rescued us from the power of temptation, in a word, who has been with us in every furnace, and has given us songs in the longest and darkest night.

But, as I remarked, a glance at this part of our subject is all the time allows. And, moreover, you can easily supply what I am compelled to omit. “God requireth that which is past,” and we should summon before us that past and its lessons.

Our past means, opportunities, advantages,—how multiplied these; but how have they been improved? What a sad mortifying disproportion between these and the advances we have made in holiness and usefulness. What dwarfs we still are. Our past sins—God will not allow us to forget these; if we do, he will employ methods to remind us of them. “Hast thou come to bring my sins to remembrance and to slay my child?” Our sins should be always before us, that we may lie low in self-abasement, may have charity for others, may be ever watchful and prayerful, may admire the patience which hath borne with us so long, may adore the efficacy of that blood which could reach and save us in such an abyss. Lastly, our past mercies. Few can look back, without acknowledging signal and striking interpositions in their behalf. And what year, what day of the lives of all of us but has been crowned with God’s goodness? These mercies appeal to every generous sentiment in our nature. Subdued, constrained by them, each of us ought to be forever exclaiming, “Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.” “Thou art my God, and I will praise thee. Thou art my God, I will exalt thee. O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good; for his mercy endureth forever.”

In conclusion, let us unite the two passages to which our meditations have been addressed this morning, and derive from them the instructions they impart. Let us never recall the past to indulge in peevish, querulous comparisons with the present; but let us so reflect upon it, that we may be wiser, holier, happier for the time to come. As to the future, we know not how it will go with us; but we know how it hath gone with us; and we know it hath gone well or ill with us, just as we have been faithful or faithless to Jesus. Let us profit by this lesson.

It is impossible for some of you to call to remembrance the former days, without confessing the unspeakable danger of deferring the decision of those great questions which conscience and God's Spirit press upon the soul. How many convictions have been stifled by procrastination, how many promises and resolutions defeated. If you persist in this course what a retrospect will be yours from a dying bed.

If in calling to remembrance the former times, any of us feel that we have declined in our spiritual life, in our communion with God, the darkness now upon us must contrast sadly with the light of those days. Well may we say, "Oh, that we were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved us; when his candle shined upon our heads and when by his light we walked through darkness." Then we rejoiced in the consciousness of his favor and his loving kindness was better than life.—Then Jesus was preciousness itself. Then our souls were refreshed by the presence of the Holy Spirit. Then the peace of God which passeth all understanding reigned in our minds; and prayer, the sanctuary, the very crosses we bore for Christ were unspeakably sweet to our hearts. It is not so with us now; and, oh, how much better the memory of these joys than all which the whole universe can give us.

To those who still cleave to Jesus the past is full of voices, and every voice speaks encouragement and consolation. When Manoah feared and said he should perish, his wife replied, "If the Lord were pleased to kill us, he would not have received a burnt offering and a meat offer-

ing at our hands, neither would he have showed us all these things." Every Christian may adopt this language. Our past mercies are pledges of God's good pleasure to help us quite through. If he designed to destroy us, he would not have awakened us, and called us by his grace, and shed abroad his love in our souls, and breathed into our hearts the spirit of adoption, and inspired this faith in his word, and kindled this zeal for his truth, his cause, his glory. Perish the impiety, which would charge him with the folly of the builder, of whom it was scoffingly said, "This man began to build and was not able to finish." God means to complete what he has begun.— "If when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, how much more, being reconciled we shall be saved by his life." Let us, then, call to remembrance our former experiences and learn to rejoice in the assurance, that he who hath begun a good work in us will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.

And while our thoughts thus reach back and gather confidence, courage, strength from the past, let them perform a still higher, nobler office; let them soar up into that grand future which can be at no great distance, and contemplate the things which faith reveals;—things which are no illusions like those which mock us here, but unmingled joys, unfading glories. Let us no longer stay in the dust. Let us rise above the stars and be habitually fixing our eyes upon that heaven, where the review of the past shall fill our minds with wonder and admiration; where the present shall be perfect purity and peace; where the future shall spread out before us an ever expanding immortality of blessedness; where, through the unwasting ages of eternity, past, present and future shall transport our souls with anthems of love and adoration which shall know no intermission, and shall forever glow with increasing ecstasy and rapture.

Sermon Tenth.

Wrong and Right DISPOSITIONS under NATIONAL JUDGMENTS.*

“I hearkened and heard, but they spake not aright; no man repented him of his wickedness, saying, What have I done? every one turned to his course, as the horse rusheth into the battle.”—*JEREMIAH* viii : 6.

MY FRIENDS, I utter no paradox, I speak only the sentiments of my calm conviction, when I tell you that your sins alarm me less than your days of humiliation and prayer. Twice, within a short period, solemn fasts for national guilt have been appointed, and in this temple, before the great and dreadful God, you have confessed your crimes and appealed to heaven for the sincerity of your repentance. How have these vows been performed? The most terrible of all calamities is now upon us. When Jehovah gave David his choice between those three sore judgments, pestilence, famine and the sword, the king said, “Let me fall into the hand of the Lord, for very great are his mercies, but let me not fall into the hand of man,”—thus marking war as the direst of all chastisements. This scourge, in its most cruel form, is at this moment drenching the land in fraternal blood; and again we are here before the great and dreadful God, to humble ourselves and implore his clemency; but what do his all-searching eyes see in us? Does he not

* Preached, Thursday, April 30, 1863, a Day of National Fasting, Humiliation and Prayer; and inscribed, “To *HIRAM WOODS*, as a tribute of affection and of grateful acknowledgement of his many acts of kindness to the author and his family.”

turn away from exterior services which mock him, and say, "Is it such a fast that I have chosen? Wilt thou call this a fast and an acceptable day to the Lord?" You recollect the dissimulation charged upon Israel, "When he slew them, then they sought him, and they returned and enquired early after God, and they remembered that God was their rock and the high God their redeemer; nevertheless they did flatter him with their mouth, and they lied unto him with their tongues." Are we not about to incur this guilt? and is there not too much reason for my being more alarmed about your fast days than about your sins?

It is in the humble hope of preventing this new insult, and averting the just displeasure it would kindle, that I have selected our text. The words are very significant; they admonish us that, while God is afflicting a nation, he does not retire from the field, nor is he an unconcerned spectator, but he waits and observes whether the strokes he inflicts accomplish the purposes he designed, whether in our hearts and lives fruits are brought forth meet for repentance.

I. "I hearkened and heard, but they spake not aright, no man repented him of his wickedness, saying, What have I done? every one turned to his course as the horse rusheth into the battle." This is the language of Jehovah, and the first truth it suggests is, that under divine judgments there are tempers which are not right, which are sinful, and as to which we ought this day seriously to examine ourselves.

One of these dispositions, and perhaps the most insulting to the Governor of the world, is indifference to the chastisements which our sins bring upon us. "Yet they were not afraid, nor rent their garments, neither the king nor any of his servants." "Lord, when thy hand is lifted up, they will not see." The policy of men is to silence the voice of conscience, to forget their sins, and thus to turn every one to his course, as the horse rusheth into the battle. But this will never do. Sin is a hideous rebellion against God's moral empire, and in mercy he employs means to bring men to think of their

ways before it is too late. To remind us of our iniquities is one great design of affliction. "In the day of adversity consider;" we are then called to "hear the rod and who hath appointed it;" nor indeed is it possible for any one to be wholly inattentive to public calamities. Nevertheless in all ages, even when the messengers of vengeance have opened and are executing their commission, the servants of the Most High have had to utter this complaint, "O Lord thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved; thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction; they have made their faces harder than a rock; they have refused to return." This is the temper which Jesus rebuked in "some that told him of the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices." Here was an act of sudden vengeance, by which certain persons who had visited Jerusalem to worship were themselves hewed down, and left weltering in their blood mingled with that of the beasts they had just slain as victims. About the same time, eighteen men had been crushed to death by the fall of the tower of Siloam. These tragical events produced, of course, some excitement. For a while men met in groups and discussed them; some expressing one opinion, and some another; but they did not lay them to heart; there was none of that recollection and reflection which such visitations ought to have awakened.

And this deplorable insensibility is at present seen everywhere in this city, and all over this land. So solemn and terrible are the times now passing over us, that it seems to me we ought instinctively to imitate Hezekiah, who "rent his clothes and covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of the Lord," and sent to the prophet saying, "This is a day of trouble, and of rebuke, wherefore lift up thy prayer for the remnant that is left." My friends, reflect for a moment upon the respect, confidence, affection which once cemented the closest friendships between those who, in our national councils, represented different portions of this commonwealth. Old companions in arms, men who had stood side by side in the imminent deadly breach and poured out their blood

like water, or who, during the darkest hours of their country's peril, had watched and prayed and deliberated with souls oppressed by public cares,—their common toils, dangers, sufferings, victories linked them together in a love like that of brothers. Engraved upon their hearts they carried each other's faces; they delighted to call their sons by each other's names,—by names so dear to them, and which would be hallowed, they believed, by succeeding generations. Look at that picture, and now look at this. With the sympathies which thus blended the souls of those patriots, contrast the tempers which for thirty years have been alienating and exasperating their descendants, and gradually undermining the sentiment of nationality by which we were kept together; the envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness; the severing of fraternal ties; the breaking up of social affinities; the reckless violation of sacred obligations; reverence, attachment, courtesy turned into contempt, hatred, contumely, insult; until now, things contrived by the wisdom and consecrated by the memory of our fathers,—things which to them were household words of joy and pride and devout gratitude,—things for which our mothers taught us to lisp our infant praises to heaven, have come to be a by-word and a loathing with millions whose ancestors bled to secure them, and to whom they were bequeathed as the noblest legacy.

These are the seeds which have been unsparingly sown; and we are now reaping, and the child unborn will reap the harvest. "A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city, and their contentions are like the bars of a castle." Their intimate relation will make brothers expect tenderness and forbearance from each other, will cause them to feel more keenly any unkindness, and if the unnatural wrong be persisted in, will poison their minds with an enmity embittered by the very memory of their former love. Of this proverb of Solomon we have a melancholy illustration in the pernicious feuds now cursing this city and State, where there are as yet no open hostilities. Everywhere, in the haunts of business, in society, in the churches, in families, a secret and most unnatural rancor insinuates its

bane. Brother is estranged from brother, and sister from sister. Parents are against their children, and children against their parents. Husbands are against wives, and wives against husbands. In short, one deep sentiment of revenge is threatening to supersede all gentle, nay all Christian feeling, and to absorb the hearts of men, of women, even of little children.

Such is our wretched condition even here. And meanwhile war is raging in some of the loveliest portions of this lovely earth given us by God as our home.— Amidst many of the most beautiful scenes of nature are heard shouts and yells which tell us that men, whose duty it is to love, are engaged in destroying one another. In any war it is not the physical sufferings which appal me,—the mutilation and slaughter of thousands in an hour. This might have been the work of the simoom or the earthquake. The awful thing is that brothers inflict such wretchedness on brothers. And if this thought is terrible in any war, what are the horrors of the present crisis, when millions connected by such ties are rushing upon each other for mutual carnage?

My brethren, what tears can be sufficient for such a catastrophe? Zion mourns as she sees her Sabbaths desecrated, and hears her temples resounding, not with the wonted songs of praise and thanksgiving, but with the groans of the wounded and dying. The poor stricken land, amazed at the unnatural conflict, torn with internal anguish, cries sorrowfully to God, like Rebecca in her agony, saying, "*why am I thus?*" only, like that afflicted mother, to receive this answer, *Thou carriest in thy bosom two nations burning with inextinguishable hate, grappling in a war cruel, unrelenting as the grave.* And surely in our inmost souls ought to be awakened the profoundest concern and commiseration. We ought not only to speak of this fearful calamity when we sit in our houses, and when we walk by the way, but by meditation, by laying it to heart, we ought to realize the judgment upon us, and with trembling solicitude to enquire what such a judgment portends. Instead of this, the minister of God has still to renew the lamentations of the prophets, and to mourn over an insensibility

which seems resolved to brave it out against Jehovah and to present an iron front to all his thunders.

You will not, of course, suppose me to desire anything like that pusillanimity which causes many to shake with terror at the approach of danger. Let Christians at least be always superior to this unworthy timidity. Under providential dispensations which overwhelm the world with consternation, they ought to be filled with perfect peace, to exhibit that calmness and serenity which true faith inspires. "Neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid. Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself, and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread, and he shall be for a sanctuary." "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble; therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea, though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. The Lord of hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge." The indifference which I am condemning is not only not the tranquillity of the Christian, but it is a combination of some of the most presumptuous vices found in man's depraved nature;—of unbelief, contempt, settled hardness of heart.

It is the apathy of practical atheism,—of the man who, instead of asking what the supreme moral Ruler is intending, sees only human passions, hears only "the noise of their waves, the tumult of the people," and looks on as if chance and accident were rioting in these disorders.

It is the insensibility of a detestable avarice, which seeks only to turn to good account the afflictions of the nation; and would prolong these miseries, because they furnish opportunities for plundering the public treasury under a profession of patriotism, or at least for extorting exorbitant profits from those who are already groaning under burdens they cannot long bear. Even in the present awful emergency, our necessities have but whetted this delirious appetite, and multitudes, from the meanest contractors to those high in office, are intent only upon gorging their voracious cupidity.

It is the obduracy of a defiant, heaven-outraging sensuality. God is summoning us, the Chief Magistrate of the nation has invited us to fast, to prostrate ourselves in humiliation and supplication. Like Nineveh, the entire people, from the President and his Cabinet to the humblest beggar, ought to lie low in sackcloth and ashes. In addition to the curse now poured out upon us, there are portentous omens in the horizon. "In the morning if the sky be lowering, you say there will be a storm." In the gloomy horoscope hanging over these early years of our national history, we ought to discern the signs of wrath still to come; and with tears we ought to seek to avert the fury of the tempest. In place of this, however, there are on all sides the sounds of revelry and mirth. There never was a season of more unbounded sensual gratification in the ball room, the theatre, the haunts of pleasure and debauchery. On this solemn fast-day God hears in the city and country not the voice of weeping, but of merriment and festivity. To a devout mind, nay to a mind not infatuated, how deplorable such a spectacle. O my countrymen, ought these things to be? Does he regard God, or love his country, who can thus make light of these calamities? Is this a time for feasting and dancing, for the viol, and tabret, and harp, and wine, and strong drink, when the judgments of God are abroad, when the avenging heavens above and the gore-sodden earth beneath are calling us to mourning and lamentation and woe?

They speak not aright, I remark, in the next place, they betray hearts most depraved, tempers utterly offensive to God, who regard the chastisement now upon us with reference only to themselves, only as it may affect their private interests.

Nothing is easier, as nothing can be more unbecoming our ministry, than invective and defamation, but there is not one of you who will think me uncharitable when I say, that an overweening self-love has long been a most prominent feature in our character as a nation. Intoxicated with success and self-flattery, we have forgotten Him who, raising us from our low estate, has crowned us with unparalleled prosperity. Our hearts

have been lifted up, and we have said, "Our wisdom and the might of our hands have gotten us this power." We have nourished the spirit of that arrogant monarch whom God so signally humbled in the very hour when he exclaimed, "Is not this great Babylon which I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honor of my majesty?" This vanity has at the same time so perverted our judgment, that we have mistaken the elements of true social and political growth. To be gigantic nation is one thing, to be a great nation is a very different thing; but this distinction our self-complacency has not permitted us to see. And, because the area of our territory has been enlarged, because commerce, wealth, population, public resources have outstripped the most visionary anticipations of those who founded the Republic, we have been flushed with a supercilious opinion of our extraordinary progress; while in virtue, patriotism, integrity, magnanimity, reverence for truth and law, for God and humanity, we have been degenerating from those heroic men with a rapidity as alarming as our physical expansion has been wonderful.

This conceit, which gives us such an exaggerated idea of our own country, is sometimes supposed to be patriotism,—so our orators and newspapers style it. In fact, however, it is nothing but self-admiration; and when judgments scourge the nation, it shews itself in its real character, by taking the form of excessive individual selfishness,—that abominable spirit which causes a man to think always only of himself, and to receive scarcely any impression from public calamities, except as they affect his own enjoyments.

That fields once waving in golden harvests are crimsoned with slaughter; that famine and pestilence walk in darkness, and destruction wasteth at noonday; that cities are sacked and given to the flames, amidst the cries of mothers clasping their infants to their breasts, and the shrieks of virgins and wives flying from a fate worse than death; that the angel of vengeance moves on strong and black pinions over the land, causing homes lately gladdened by love and happiness to re-echo the

wails of widows and orphans; that these convulsions threaten to upheave the very foundation of liberty, to extinguish the brightest hopes which ever dawned upon the world; and that the cause of Jesus must suffer in such terrible tragedies;—all this excites scarcely a thought in the bosom of a man in whom vanity and selfishness are the ruling passions. He is his own centre and circumference. His religion is only an apotheosis of himself. Attentive only to himself, he sees in the disasters which burst upon the State only so much peril to his own prosperity and pleasure. If these be untouched, he knows no sympathy for the wretchedness of others; nay, he lives upon the miseries of others; he secretly rejoices, as he contemplates his own good fortune, and compares it with the desolations which have swept over so many thousands.

But of all the dispositions which offend the Sovereign Governor of the world when he is correcting a people for sin, the most common is that which overlooks “the operation of his hands,” and sees only the operation of secondary agencies.

This is a thought which I am exceedingly anxious to impress upon you; because, as to this impiety, there is practically so little difference between infidels and most people professing to be religious; and because the habitual acknowledgment of a personal God, interfering directly in all the concerns of earth, is precisely that element which makes one man more a Christian than another.

If you consult the Bible, you will find that the passions most odious to the Divine government are pride, ambition, sensuality, and vindictiveness. If you examine history, you will at once discover that these are also the very vices which have proved most fatal to the order and stability of human governments. And, now, a moment’s reflection will convince you that the only permanent restraint upon these destructive propensities, is a habitual consciousness of being, at all times, and in all places, exposed to the inspection of that Omniscience which the Scriptures reveal. Before this glorious God, (especially feeling, as we all do, how he has loaded us

with mercies, and how we have requited them all with the basest ingratitude)—pride and ambition are abased, we “abhor ourselves in dust and ashes,” humility becomes the pervading principle of the soul. An abiding sense of accountability to the Eternal Judge for our most secret feelings and desires, represses licentious gratifications in their sources, where alone they can be checked with certainty. And it is only by the overawing recognition of an Almighty Ruler, and the expectation of a future reckoning, that the vindictive spirit of man can be rebuked, and true meekness—the meekness of principle—control his temper. Let this faith in a Divine Avenger be extinguished, let this fear and reverence be banished, and it is a simple matter of fact that malignity, revenge, murder would soon mock to scorn the impotence of human philosophy or legislation, and nations called Christian, this nation, would re-enact all those horrors of the French Revolution, from the bare recital of which the imagination recoils. During that terrible but most instructive period, the Deity was deposed. Reason was throned as the presiding goddess of the world; and you know what followed. By expunging the idea of God, they expunged all reverence for the rights, the dignity, the immortality of man. Multitudes were massacred as so many brutes. The entire land became a theatre on which revenge and ferocity blazed forth without any disguise. And the most refined, intellectual people in Europe were converted, women as well as men, into demons, revelling in hellish orgies, their hands reeking with blood, and their mouths dripping with blasphemy.

Nor does this belief in the Supreme Being only repress the depravities of our nature, it inbreeds and nourishes the purest, noblest virtues. Move where he may over the whole earth, the man of the world never meets God. His thoughts wander through the universe, explore the heights, vex the depths, expatiate among the stars, but “God is not in all his thoughts.” Go where he will, the Christian’s mind is fixed on the Eternal Wisdom, Power and Love. All from God, all with God, all in God.—Nothing by chance. Nothing by human passions, with-

out his direct appointment. War, pestilence, famine, vine and fig tree blooming or blasted,—all are accomplishing his inscrutable but adorable purposes. The Christian has ever before his contemplation a Glórious Presence to sustain, purify, elevate his soul. We cannot see how these perplexed and complicated processes can be tending to such results, how they are working together for the divine glory and the triumph of truth and holiness on the earth; but unerring Wisdom is controlling and adjusting all. *That is enough.* Faith, patience, hope, gratitude, strength, courage, integrity, joy—all the virtues which adorn the Christian and the patriot, which bless the church and the nation, are built up and established by this consciousness.

The disposition of him who stops at second causes is the reverse of this. It abolishes the divine providence, and makes nature another department of atheism. Do not misunderstand me. No one denies the propriety of discussing the conduct of those who are the immediate instruments of good or evil to a land. As to measures adopted by the government under which we live, it is right and fit that every citizen should respectfully examine their merits. The Scriptures require us to be scrupulously obedient to the laws. They declare that “the powers that be are ordained of God;” and command us to “submit ourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake,” to be “subject not only for wrath, but also for conscience’ sake.” Nobody, however, questions the privilege of candidly and temperately investigating the conduct of those to whom the administration of public affairs has been confided. This is not only a prerogative inseparable from freedom, but a duty we owe to the commonwealth of which we are guardians, and to our rulers themselves—who have a right to any knowledge we possess, who will never hear the truth from obsequious parasites, and must be profited by the honest counsels of the wise and good in the land. But to rest ultimately in subordinate agencies, and come short of the glory of that God in whose hands they are only clay in the hands of the potter; to forget that the Assyrian was only “the rod of his anger,” that Herod and Pontius Pilate did “only

what his hand and his counsel determined before to be done," that not only all matter but all spirit,—our loves, hates, schemes passions, our very sins,—is over-ruled by infallible wisdom; not to know that things which to us seem reigning confusion and uncertainty are pre-established harmonies and subserve the purposes of eternal power and goodness:—such blindness is not more insulting to the Supreme Intelligence, than it is disgraceful to our reason and philosophy.

My brethren, when we thus dwell upon second causes what do we mean? what is our system? Is the world around us a chaos of fortuitous atoms, as Epicurus taught? or is it a collection of beings which God has formed, and which he governs by laws he has established? In creating matter, did not God foresee all the possible results of all possible arrangements of matter? In forming mind, did not God foreknow all the consequences of all the possible conceptions and combinations of intelligent agents? In endowing his creatures with affections and passions, did he not comprehend all the possible workings and effects of these faculties? Unless we deny the omniscience of the Supreme Being, we can give but one reply to these questions. But if we answer these questions affirmatively, then we must discard the omnipotence and benignity of God; or we must admit that—foreseeing all possible effects—he does order all changes for the highest and noblest purposes; so that "the wrath of man shall praise him;" so that the hearts of kings shall be turned as the rivers of waters to do his will; so that not a sparrow, not a hair of our head can fall without his direct command; so that the felicity of his children shall be secured by their profoundest afflictions, the empire of Satan shall be demolished by its very triumphs, and disasters which seem fatal to the Redeemer's cause shall extend and perpetuate his kingdom.

And this forgetfulness of an all-pervading Providence is as pernicious in its influence as it is impious in itself. While we recognize God, there will be no sinful resentment against those who afflict us; we will remember that they "could have no power except it were given them from on high;" and we will imitate David who, in the

gloomiest period of his life, when Shimei cursed him, and when Abishai, burning with indignation, asked permission to slay the reviler of God's anointed, calmly replied, "Let him curse, the Lord hath said unto him, Curse David." But if we confine our attention to human agents, the inevitable consequence must be that our thoughts will be diverted from our sins, and instead of humbling ourselves penitently, we will only add to the guilt for which God is chastising us, the fresh guilt of bitterness, malignity, and revenge against those whom we view as the architects of our ruin. It is true that this over-ruling power does not diminish the wickedness of men, but it furnishes reflections which will moderate our anger, and prevent the irritation and exasperation which would otherwise inflame our souls. "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath," (that is, leave the matter with God who judgeth uprightly) "for it is written, Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore, if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink; for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."

This is not all. Overlooking God in the calamities which come upon us, we will overlook him in our hopes of deliverance from those calamities, our expectation will be from human wisdom and power. "Thus saith the Lord, cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and making flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord,"—such was the denunciation against Israel for withdrawing their trust from Jehovah, and placing it upon their own resources. My dear brethren, have we not incurred this sentence? On every hand panegyrics proclaim the transcendent skill of the national financiers and diplomatists, the perfect equipment and discipline of the army and navy, the experience and prowess of distinguished military commanders; but where is the public sense of dependence upon God's protecting care? Except a few whom in these dark days the Holy Spirit is drawing closer to Jesus, we seek in vain for those who are looking up for aid, who are repairing humbly, suppliantly, instinctively to the throne

of the Heavenly Grace, saying, "Our souls, wait only upon God, for our expectation is from him; he only is our rock and our salvation and our glory, the rock of our strength and our refuge is in God. Trust in him at all times; ye people pour out your heart before him; God is a refuge for us. Give us help from trouble, for vain is the help of man. Except the Lord build the house they labor in vain that build it; except the Lord keep the city the watchman waketh but in vain. Some trust in chariots, and some in horses; but we will remember the name of the Lord."

II. Having dwelt longer than I intended upon the speaking and thinking which are "not aright," I will now indicate in so many words the duties which become us in this "day of trouble and of rebuke and of blasphemy."

The first duty,—that which the appointment of this day and our assembling in this house immediately suggest,—is, the remembrance of God, the detachment of our minds from those exterior objects upon which our attention has been dissipated, and the recognition of that hand which is now lifted up to chasten us that we may be corrected, or to plunge us into an abyss of ruin. God now hearkens and hears, that he may know whether we thus humbly acknowledge his direct visitation in these national disorders. "When thou art in tribulation, and all these things are come upon thee, if thou turn to the Lord thy God, and shalt be obedient unto his voice, (for the Lord thy God is a merciful God) he will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which he sware unto them." On the other hand, if we refuse to consider him who is afflicting us, we must expect sorer judgments. "Lord when thy hand is lifted up they will not see; *but they shall see;*" blows shall come which will compel them to confess that there is a God who judgeth in the earth, and these blows shall strike suddenly the rulers and the people, the highest and the lowest. "The people turneth not unto him that smiteth them, neither do they seek the Lord of hosts; therefore the Lord will cut off from Israel head and tail, branch and rush in one day."

It is the province of statesmen to explore the past, to discover the causes of the present convulsions; and certainly, whatever may have been the deficiencies of our politicians in other respects, there has been no stint in this style of patriotism. If the country can be saved by dissertations on the origin of our troubles, we may dismiss all apprehensions. In Congress, by the press, from platforms and pulpits, men have speculated and dogmatized,—differing from each other, and sometimes strangely contradicting themselves. But of what avail are these theories now? *The persistent injustice of the North. The pride and arrogance of the South. The reckless fanaticism of the abolitionists. The disappointed ambition of demagogues.* Well, well, but my brother, argue as you may as to these matters, what good have you accomplished? You have denounced your opponent, you have exposed his falsehood; you have convinced yourself, if nobody else; but have you brought the country any nearer to the end of its distresses? No, and again, No. Whatever may have been the instrumentality, there is one Being who “hath brought this great evil upon us,” and who alone can say to the tempest, “Peace, be still.” Let us bow reverently before this Being. Let us lie low in devout acknowledgment of his awful power and divine majesty. Elated with prosperity, Nebuchadnezzar did not “know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men and giveth it to whom he will.” For this forgetfulness of the God who had exalted him, you remember how deeply he was humbled. When his punishment had accomplished the divine purposes, the anger of the Lord ceased; and from this heathen we may learn the sentiments of awe, humiliation, adoration, which become us to-day. “I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the Most High, and I praised and honored him that liveth forever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation. And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou? Now

I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment; and those that walk in pride he is able to abase."

We are shocked at the mythology of the ancient Greeks and Romans; but their faith even in such deities did shed over them some influences for good. Regarding their gods as the witnesses, rewarders, avengers of human actions, they constantly appealed to them, as the arbiters by whom the destinies of individuals and of nations were decided. For us to be "without God in the world;" for us, at this day, when the Bible unfolds such conceptions of his character, and such motives to raise us above the earth in rejoicing adoration of the wisdom, power, and goodness which preside over the universe;—for us now, especially under chastisement, to banish him from the affairs of the world, this is a stupidity and depravity of which the Scriptures speak in terms of amazement and abhorrence. "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib, but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider." "Understand, ye brutish among the people, and ye fools when will ye be wise? He that planted the ear shall he not hear? He that formed the eye shall he not see? He that chastiseth the heathen shall not he correct? He that teacheth man knowledge shall not he know?" Let us guard against this gloomy blindness which surrenders us to inexplicable confusion, leaves us at the mercy of human passions; or binds us as helpless victims to a mechanical system of general laws, against which all prayers and precautions are only impotent struggles to escape an exorable fatalism. Let us recollect, too, that just so far as men can eradicate the sense of God's all pervading presence, they prostrate the only barriers which can effectually restrain their vicious propensities, and are ready, even in the midst of the most appalling providences, to abandon themselves to the intoxication of the wildest excesses "as the horse rusheth into the battle." "Wo unto them that rise up early in the morning that they may follow strong drink, that continue until night till wine inflame them, and the

harp, and the viol, the tabret and pipe, and wine are in their feasts; but they regard not the works of the Lord nor the operation of his hands."

Having recognized the hand of God in these eventful scenes through which we are passing, our next duty is, to ascribe the sore evils now afflicting this land to the sins by which his anger has been justly provoked, and to repent of those sins.

It is not for us to determine the precise end which God contemplates in present his dispensations towards us; and the confidence with which we every day hear men pronouncing upon the secrets of eternal wisdom, is a sad proof of folly and presumption. The great thing for us is not to penetrate the hidden decrees of the Eternal, but to learn the plain lessons which he is teaching us. And, beyond all doubt, God's judgments are always intended to remind us of our condition as fallen, guilty beings. Labor, pain, suffering, famine, pestilence, war,—could not God prevent these calamities? Certainly. Why then are they permitted? Because, on this planet, the Divine Government is dealing with apostate subjects, who need this sharp discipline to prevent still greater evils. To judge of God's providences without taking this principle along with us, is as if a man should go around a district desolated by fire or flood, and, forgetting the deluge or conflagration, should be curiously enquiring, what could have blackened this wall? or charred that door? or what could have swept this wreck here? and piled up that heap of rubbish there?

God designs, however, not only by his general treatment to make us feel our fallen condition, but by special inflictions to punish us, as individuals and as nations, for our crimes. Conscience tells us that pain is the proper penalty of sin. And between our iniquities and our sufferings there is a connection indissoluble, though mysterious; a connection sometimes manifest even to others; but generally perceived only by ourselves, traced with vivid and terrible distinctness in our own consciousness, when some bitter affliction "brings our sin to remembrance."

Nations, as nations, exist only in the present economy; the chastisements sent upon them must, therefore, be imputed to their crimes. Among individuals, exceptions may be found to the rule, that success follows honesty; for great prosperity sometimes attends the breach of private faith. But as to nations there are no exceptions. Sooner or later, violations of public faith are sure to avenge themselves on a guilty people; and sometimes the judgments which scourge them are the striking, palpable rebounds of their sins. We see at once the connection between the destruction of the first-born of Egypt, and the murder of the first-born of the Israelites. The accumulated miseries of the French Revolution had their origin, remotely but clearly, in the massacre of St. Bartholomew, and the revocation of the edict of Nantes. And other examples could easily be cited. When I announce this proposition from the pulpit, everybody receives it as almost self-evident. But carry it into the councils and cabinets which govern empires, and it will be received as one of those superstitious commonplaces that deserve no serious practical attention. Nay, my brethren, while we all readily assent to this maxim, how many of us believe it and act upon it?

I take great pleasure in remarking that the Proclamation which invited us to meet here to-day distinctly and emphatically recognizes this great principle. It attributes these national judgments to the displeasure of that Supreme Ruler against whom we have sinned. It is to confess our iniquities as a people that we have assembled in this temple. It becomes us thus to keep this solemn fast. "Surely it is meet to be said unto God, I have borne chastisement, I will not offend any more; that which I see not, teach thou me. If I have done iniquity, I will do no more." But now, are we sincere in this show of penitence? In our very lamentations for what we call *national sins*, are we not laying a flattering unction to our consciences? If we would disarm, if we would not insult the Majesty of heaven, let us remember that the iniquities of a nation are the aggregate iniquities of those who constitute the nation, and that it is the confession of indi-

vidual guilt which God especially requires. "I hearkened and heard, but they spake not aright; *no man repented him of his wickedness, saying, what have I done?*"

In speaking of national sins, most persons seem to intend the iniquities which are sanctioned by public authority, or which have been committed by those in office; at least, they plainly mean the corruptions of some party or some people much worse than themselves. And, unquestionably, if to acknowledge and bewail the sins of others were our duty, God would not hearken and hear in vain to-day. If to say what others have done, to blacken the characters and abhor the conduct of others; if this be contrition, why then the preaching of Jonah did not produce such penitents as those who crowd our streets and fill our churches. Our compunctious visitings are marked, too, by the very characters which the apostle designates as the proofs of genuine repentance. For I may truly say of you, "*Behold what clearing of yourselves; yea, what indignation; yea, what revenge.*" But if what the Inspector of hearts demands be, that each of us shall smite upon his breast and cry, "God be merciful to me, a sinner," then, I ask, where are our penitents? In all this assembly, in this city, in this nation, where are those who are searching their own bosoms, trying their own thoughts, deploring and forsaking the sins in their own lives which have contributed to bring these tokens of God's anger upon us? Suppose that this moment the Judge of all should offer to spare us, if in this city he could find fifty, if forty, if thirty, if twenty, if ten souls, bowed down in self-abhorrence for their sins; do you believe that we would be spared?

Oh, what a contrast between our spirit and that of Daniel, who, though "a man greatly beloved," commences his confessions with his own guilt. "And whiles I was speaking, and praying, and confessing *my sin.*" What a contrast between this nation and that city whose profound humiliation once caused the lifted thunder to drop from the band of an insulted God. Though an unknown stranger, scarcely has Jonah announced his mission, when the aspect of the whole metropolis is changed; and forgetting all distinctions, burying all animosities, the

haughty king, the corrupt aristocracy, the idolatrous priests, the ignorant, degraded people at once cover themselves with sackcloth and ashes before a Deity of whom they knew so little. This Deity we well know. Not by the voice of a stranger, but by his own terrible judgments, this God is now seeking to subdue our rebellious spirits, to bring us to abase ourselves in the dust, feeling that he remembers all our wickedness, and that our own doings have justly drawn down all this vengeance upon us.

But, alas for the spectacle now exhibited in these States—I mean in these States which are called loyal. With the Divine wrath hovering over us, and ready to launch its curses upon our guilty heads, we are filled with wrath, we are launching curses against each other. While God is rebuking and scourging us so signally, we are saying, “We do well to be angry.” At home, in our cities, at our very firesides, we are fostering passions unknown to a generous soldier when facing his foe, or mingling in the shock of battle.* At a time when all ought to put their mouths in the dust, and humble themselves under the mighty hand which corrects us, we are fulminating mutual anathemas, hurling criminations and recriminations, indulging in party rancor, in personal malignity, in those most deplorable tempers which are now envenoming so many hearts, dividing so many families, rending in pieces so many churches.

I will only add that, in this day of visitation, prayer—the prayer of penitence and faith—is our urgent duty and our unspeakable consolation. “Ye that make mention of the Lord” (literally, ye that are his remembrancers to remind him of his promises) “keep not silence.” “We acknowledge, O Lord, our wickedness, and the iniquity of our fathers, for we have sinned against thee. Yet though our iniquities testify against us, do not abhor us; leave us not. Turn us again, O God; cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved. O Lord God, the God of the spirits of all flesh, is there anything too hard for thee? Thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power, and by thy stretched out arm. Incline thine ear and hear; open thine eyes, behold our miseries; for we

* See Note on page 194.

do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousness, but for thy great mercies."

One of the special objects for which we keep this holy day, is prayer. The penitential cries of a nation can arrest and turn away the anger of God, even after sentence has gone forth against it. "At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up and to pull down, and to destroy it; if that nation against whom I have pronounced turn from the evil, I will repent of the evil I thought to do unto them." And this is most touchingly seen in the history to which I have just referred; that record of man's cruel nature,—for what harm had the Ninevites ever done to Jonah?—and of the benignity of Him who "is good and ready to forgive, and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon him."

If we refuse to "turn to Him that smiteth us," nothing is left but that more fearful judgments should overtake us. "If ye will not be reformed by me by these things, but will walk contrary unto me, then will I also walk contrary unto you, and will punish you yet seven times for your sins." On the contrary, if our hearts be humbled, and we "accept of the punishment of our iniquities," there are no limits to the promises which are made to the prayer of faith. No matter into what depths we have sunk, "if from thence we shall seek the Lord our God, we shall find him, if we seek him with all our heart and with all our soul, for the Lord our God is a merciful God." Let us implore the forgiveness and interposition of this adorable Being. Let us run and cast ourselves in the breach, to turn away the wrath of God, lest he should destroy us all.

In this day of darkness and of gloominess our earnest prayers ought to ascend for our country. And understand what that word imports. When I speak of our country, I mean not merely the soil upon which we happen to be born or to live, but everything which is dearest to the human heart. I mean liberty, self-government, peace, truth, honor, civilization, progress, prosperity, all the amenities of life, all the charms of friendship, all the endearments of home, in short, all

those political, civil, domestic, religious institutions which have diffused such blessed influences over the land. We pray for all this, when we pray for our country. In the name of Him who, as he saw the shadows infolding his earthly country, "wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong to thy peace!"—in the name of Jesus we humble ourselves before the Father of an infinite majesty, imploring him to avert his righteous indignation, and to perpetuate these inestimable privileges to us, our children, and our children's children, to the remotest posterity.

With redoubled fervency and importunity we ought now to pray that the Gospel may assert its supremacy, as the wisdom of God, and the power of God for the regeneration of a ruined world. Rest assured, this is our only hope, if we desire the permanent restoration of peace and harmony among these States, and the cessation of wars to the end of the earth. The promises we every day hear of a speedy reconciliation between the dis-severed portions of the Union, by some political contrivances, some wise party combinations, may be quite sincere and patriotic, but they are really the wildest chimeras of a distempered imagination. No, my friends, while we look to human agencies, it is not peace, but war, and war waged with unmitigated determination, we must expect. It must be so from the very nature of the conflict, which is a war of principles, and admits of no compromise. Here and everywhere there can be inviolable peace and good will among men, only as the religion of Jesus extirpates those lusts from whence come wars and fightings. That, century after century, the annals of our race have been written in blood, is a phenomenon which shocks us, but they will continue to be written in blood until grace shall reign where sin now reigns.

Philanthropists have hoped that education, civilization, or close bonds of union might impress a different character upon fallen humanity; they ought to see, however, in the history of refined Europe, and especially in the civil war now ravaging this country, how visionary are

these schemes. But let vital Christianity, as it glowed in the Saviour's bosom, pervade the earth, and there will be no more war; because there will be no more envy, jealousy, rivalry, malignity, fraud, violence, perfidy, rapacity. "Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more;" because the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of Christ, and he will subdue all those passions of which war is at once the fruit and the punishment. Men will then reverence the dignity of human nature, and the sanctity of human rights; they will feel the power of love binding them to a common Father and to each other; they will recognize the sacredness of justice; they will regard self-sacrifice as one of the highest duties, and the lust of dominion over their fellow creatures as one of the most detestable crimes.

Lastly, **THY WILL BE DONE!** let this be now and ever the language of our inmost souls. Let us go to the bottom of our hearts, and put and keep ourselves in harmony with God; with all his will, unknown as well as known.

I do not presume to read the future as to our own State, or as to the nation. Desolation has careered along our borders, and we have been spared. Space has been given us for repentance, yet we have not repented. We know not what any hour may bring upon us. This once glorious Union is rent by convulsions. Lurid storms have muffled up the prospects which lately cheered the land and the whole earth, nor can any mortal vision pierce the gloomy recesses beyond. But "the Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice. Clouds and darkness are round about Him, righteousness and judgment are the habitation of His throne." The living Spirit is in the wheels, guiding them on their course; and though the maddening axles should be driven through blood and fire, each revolution is accomplishing the purposes, carrying forward the enterprises of eternal wisdom, power and love. Let us cherish habitual faith in Him who holds the destinies of the universe in his hand, no matter how dangerous the clouds, how portentous the

darkness, which veil His throne, and lower above our heads.

If thus, in humble, adoring confidence, speaking and feeling aright, we cry unto God, the Mercy Seat will not be inaccessible to us, sprinkled as it is with the blood of atonement; this day shall not be spent in vain; and what may we not expect from that wisdom and goodness which planted these States, and have watched over them amid so many perils? Like Abraham before Sodom, let us plead for a guilty nation. Like David, "when he saw the angel that smote the people," let us throw ourselves between the sword and its victims. Like the faithful few in Jerusalem, let us "sigh and cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst of us." Then we may hope that the sword will be commanded to return to its scabbard. Or, if it must still devour, we can calmly look up to the hand which wields its terrors; we shall experience the fulfillment of that promise, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee;" and these calamities will cause us to lift our aspirations more lovingly and longingly to that country where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest, in which there shall be no more curse, neither any pain, or sorrow, or crying, or death, but the redeemed of the Lord shall walk there, and they shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat,—for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of water, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

[See Page 190.)

NOTE.—While regarding war as an expression of human depravity,—a depravity which would remain and find some other development if war should cease,—I am far from denying that many very fine traits of character are brought out by the profession of arms. The discipline of arduous campaigns and the rap-
ture of battle elevate the soul to a self-sacrifice, courage and heroism, which command universal admiration. Nor only these martial virtues. Between the officers and soldiers of contending armies there are often passages of chivalrous amenity and genuine

kindness, which ought to rebuke the rancor and bitterness now pervading this city. Two instances of this generous feeling have come directly to my knowledge, and I cannot resist the pleasure of reciting them.

The first case showed the noble spirit of a common soldier, and took place on the bloody plains of Antietam. While with a piece of rock he was assisting a member of his company to hammer the ball in a rifle which had become leaded, Captain Robertson, of Georgia, was shot down. There he lay till the close of the fight, and about ten paces from him lay a Federal soldier, also badly wounded. When the Confederates had retired and the firing had ceased, one of those harpies who prowl about camps approached the Captain, and, seeing a gold chain on his breast, at once seized it, with a valuable gold watch, and was making off with his spoils in spite of the entreaties of the Captain, who was unable to move at all. No sooner did the Federal soldier see what had happened, than he seized a gun near him, and raising himself on his arm with great difficulty and pain, he levelled it at the thief, ordering him to restore the plunder; an order which was tremblingly obeyed. He then crawled to his prostrate foe, and they lay side by side in friendly conversation, consoling each other, till stretchers were brought during the night and they were taken away.

The other instance was a deed of graceful courtesy soon after the battle of Fair Oaks. In that affair the Federal forces lost most of their camp equipage. Among those who displayed great gallantry at Fair Oaks was General Briggs, a son of Governor Briggs, of Massachusetts;—that model of true Christian nobleness, whom God mercifully spared the misery of living in these times, and of whom I may truly say,

Justum ac tenacem propositi virum
Non civium ardor prava jubentium,
Non vultus instantis tyranni
Mente quatit solida.

This officer was severely wounded, and, besides other things, he lost the miniatures of his wife and children. By the very first flag of truce the pictures were sent to him; with a letter from General Jenkins, of South Carolina, in which the writer warmly assured General Briggs of the great gratification he felt in being able at once to restore the portraits. He would be happy, he said, to meet General Briggs at all times in the field; but he was a husband and father himself, and he well knew how precious such treasures were to the heart.

Sermon Eleventh.

A CITY OR HOUSE DIVIDED AGAINST ITSELF.*

"AND every city or house divided against itself shall not stand."—
MATT. xii : 25.

MY BRETHREN: You have fully known my manner of life—from my first leaving home, friends, family, and an endeared church, that I might come among you—to this present day. So scrupulously have I abstained from politics here, that during eighteen years I have exercised the right of suffrage only twice; once when the cause of Temperance was at stake, and once that I might give my vote to a worthy man who had publicly assailed me for my religious opinions. For all who have questioned me as to parties and factions, my answer has been this: *I am a Christian.* What is your name? *I am a Christian.* What side are you on? *I am a Christian.* Where is your home? *I am a Christian.* What is your occupation? *I am a Christian.* What are your aims, aspirations? *I am a Christian.* "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world." Nor this morning am I going to depart from my settled purpose; for the matter before us has not to do with partizan questions, but is of profound national and religious importance.

In the preceding context, Jesus speaks of the weakening, ruinous effects of civil war. "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation." And of these

calamities we have, during the last few years, been receiving terrible lessons. We had read before of the horrors of war. Alas, bitter experience has taught us now what war means;—the ravages of armies; fields waving in rich harvest swept over as by fire; the terror and consternation impressed upon a quiet village by the approach of hostile battalions,—women and children, the aged and infirm flying from their homes, and those homes laid in ashes; the heaps of dead weltering in their gore, festering under a broiling sun, and devoured by foul beasts and obscene birds of prey, and the heaps of wounded, lacerated, mangled, to whom death would have been a mercy; multitudes forever unfitted by lives of recklessness, tumult, and blood, for the peaceful pursuits of society; the honest laborer stripped of his hard-earned pittance, and burdened with taxes, while profligate bloodsuckers and plunderers of the public revenue batten in bloated affluence; freedom imperilled by the alarming accumulation of power in the hands of the Government, and by the creation of vast bodies of men inured to a wild unsettled existence, hardened by familiarity with violence and rapine, delighting to follow an intrepid, victorious leader—knowing no agency but that of physical force, and to whom the excitements of the campaign and the delirious raptures of battle (“*gaudia certaminis*”) have become as the breath of their nostrils;—but I will not dwell on this dismal picture. It is enough to say, in the language of General Sherman, at Atlanta, that “WAR IS BARBARISM;” that where invading legions penetrate, their course is over blackened wastes and ruins, and the music to which they march is the cries, wails, shrieks of human wretchedness; that their very mission is to kill, devastate, destroy; in a word, that amidst flagrant hostilities, there is, and must be a suspension of all the rules, principles, blessed influences, which the Gospel seeks to diffuse over the earth.

These hideous phenomena have now disappeared. God has commanded the sword to return to its scabbard; there, I hope, to rust. But Jesus well knew that the evils of civil war do not cease with the war. He knew what is in man; what mutual jealousies, animosities,

hatreds, intestine war always entails upon a nation. Hence in the text, he warns us of the pernicious consequences of social and domestic dissensions:—"And every city or house divided against itself shall not stand." It is upon this topic I wish to say a few words. Honor me with a fair and candid hearing.

Of the malignity of those passions which spring from civil war, as from a prolific and poisoned root, I need not speak in general terms. You are only too mournfully familiar with them. You know too well how they so blind and distort men's minds, that they can judge impartially of nothing,—neither of persons nor actions; how the very language of a people is perverted, and truth, honor, friendship, integrity, patriotism, religion, borrow new meanings from party zeal and rancor; how, stirred and agitated as if by infernal fires, society casts to the surface its most dangerous elements,—bad men and fanatics who, sometimes under the pretense of loyalty, sometimes under the garb of religion, seek to persecute all who will not run to the same excess of bitterness with themselves; how, even in woman, the voice of peace, love, charity is silenced, and noise, clamor, evil speaking, and malice, riot on every hand; how their leaders shrink from addressing the reason of the multitude, and prefer to follow their prejudices and passions; and how the press and the pulpit become vitiated, and pander to the depraved public appetite for sensation and mischief.

All wars are fruitful in this pernicious husbandry; especially those waged between nations which are contiguous, as were England and Scotland before their union. But this harvest comes to its baleful perfection only after such convulsions as those which have been shaking this land like an earthquake. As the glowing floods from the bosom of a volcano are said to impart wonderful fertility to the soil, so the lava passions which during a civil war inundate the land and burn like a conflagration, quicken into a rank and dismal vegetation all the worst corruption of our nature.

With reference to the evils to be dreaded from these fraternal hostilities which for the past four years have

been raging over this country, there are two truths which must fill a thoughtful mind with concern and alarm.— The first is, the character of the people who have been arrayed against each other, and among whom war has not been “a game at which kings have played,” but a conflict into which every man and woman has entered, heart and soul.

Never was there upon the earth a population so restless, active and enterprising. It is not merely that the country is in the prime and flush of its youth; there seem to enter into its very constitution a boldness, a daring spirit of adventure, a thirst for stimulating competitions, an intelligence, an energy, an enthusiasm, the vigor and elasticity of which have risen with a rebound under the severest pressure and which have illustrated this protracted struggle by a valor, a self-immolation, a wealth of resource, a prodigal lavishment of blood and treasure, a chivalrous heroism, such as the world had never witnessed.

Now, for the mariner who has been tossed day and night for weeks upon an ocean lashed by the fury of tropical hurricanes to expect the surges at once to subside, when the storm abates, would not be half so unreasonable as for us to hope that all these characteristic impulses and passions will be arrested by the cessation of actual hostilities. The tendency may be to repose; but unless Jesus himself shall say, “Peace, be still,” and the benignant spirit of the Gospel be breathed into men’s souls, our community will continue to be pervaded and disturbed by private animosities, by personal hatreds, by an inflamed party rancor utterly unscrupulous in sacrificing the tranquillity and happiness of society for the gratification of its ambition or resentments, by dark baleful feuds between neighbors and members of the same family, exasperated by mutual injuries and insults, rejoicing in each other’s humiliation, burning for each other’s ruin.

The other truth is, that we have a common language. When a contest between two nations separated by intervening provinces has been terminated, little remains to keep alive bitter and malignant feelings. Even between

countries which are conterminous, if they speak different languages, there can be no general and intimate interchange of thoughts and feelings, because their respective populations do not understand each other. Although they touch there is no real contact between them. Collect a number of persons under the same roof, or in the same assembly; if they express themselves in various dialects, they are still strangers with a whole hemisphere keeping them apart. They cannot co-operate for good. Hence on the day of Pentecost, that the converts from various parts of the earth might combine together in the work of the Gospel, this barrier was removed by a miracle. And they are equally restrained from any conspiracy for evil. They cannot give vent to sentiments of malice, hatred, ridicule or revenge.

A common language enables these United States and the citizens of these States to act upon one another directly, and with the most unremitting and mischievous power. This nation has never been involved in war, it has been entangled in only a few unpleasant complications, with any of the empires on the continent of Europe, because, however arrogant may have been their tone and bearing, they express themselves in tongues unknown to the masses here. Their insults are, therefore, comparatively harmless. It has been just the reverse with England. We have already been engaged in two wars with her, and are now, I fear, drifting into a third. And one reason is, that not a taunt can be uttered there, not a term of reproach, scorn, defiance,—in Parliament, in the Cabinet, at a public meeting, in a parlor—which does not reach the general ear on this side of the water, and kindle the indignation of every sequestered village and hamlet. And if this be true as to Great Britain, with a whole ocean rolling between us, need I tell you what will be the growing alienations and exasperations in communities, the members of which are closely bound together, are meeting each other every day, and where a mercenary press and the virulence of political factions, of personal hatred and vindictiveness are constantly inflaming the worst passions by torrents of calumny and misrepresentations, by stinging insinuations and invectives.

Enter, my brethren, into these truths. And now, think what must be the results, if this deplorable state of things continues, if these criminations and recriminations, this interchange of resentment and abuse go on estranging and exacerbating those who live in the same city, in the same street, in the same house. The consequences are as inevitable as they will be disastrous.

Party spirit—the most ferocious and relentless of all vices—will be wrought up to madness. We shall walk every day over hidden fires; and every election will be an outburst of pent up rage and fury,—the explosion of a concealed mine loaded with the most destructive materials.

The moral sentiment of the community will be impaired and debauched. Truth, reason, candor will be driven out of the land by a vitiated taste; the very ideas of right and wrong will be weakened and well nigh abolished; a false, meretricious standard of honor and dishonor will be erected; men will no longer be deterred by shame, nor impelled by a proper love of praise; rewards and reproaches will be distributed so unjustly, that the worthiest citizens will be proscribed, and the vilest men will be exalted; virtue will be no longer the end but the means; it will be no more charity but party zeal which will “cover the multitude of sins.” This corruption of the public manners may begin in obscure and insignificant quarters, but it will soon infect the whole body politic. The blood can diffuse life and health only when it circulates freely through all the vessels. Disease commences insidiously in the obstructions of the minuter veins and channels. But soon the arteries and the heart feel the the disorder, and coldness, feebleness, death spread over the entire system.

I will only add, that the fatal seeds of prejudice and passion which are sown broad-cast by civil war send their venomous roots in every direction, into the very sanctuary of God and into the shrines of domestic peace and happiness.

The meekness, the forbearance, the gentleness, all the sweet charities of the religion of Jesus are supplanted by envy, hatred, malice. Ministers no longer preach Christ

crucified; they proclaim the dogmas, fulminate the anathemas of a rabid, partizan intolerance. And churches and ecclesiastical conclaves become political inquisitors; usurp the power which God has committed to the civil magistrate "for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well; and thus instead of seeking the peace of Jerusalem, they fill her courts with strife, and cause all her pleasant places to mourn and be in bitterness.

Nor are the sanctities of the domestic hearth safe from the unhallowed incursion of these truculent passions.— There, not Jesus, but the Devil "sends a sword" which severs the most sacred bonds; setting the father against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the husband against the wife, and the wife against the husband; so that a man's worst enemies are those of his own household.

My friends, I have not spoken too strongly. No language can exaggerate the evils which civil war leaves behind it, thickly lodged in the very heart of society, interwoven with all its fibres, and endowed with the most subtle and terrible power of self-propagation. Alas, we all see how this community is now demoralized by these pestilent aftergrowths. From my inmost soul I mourn over their influence in the churches. At the North and at the South their developments are so portentous, that there is now before our Government one solemn alternative, and only one. Either those indignities and humiliations which the fanatical passions of the hour would heap upon a brave people because they are now helpless must be arrested; or the States lately in rebellion must, at a vast expense, be held under military despotism, as subjugated provinces,—filled with curses, "not loud but deep," (deeper because not loud,) against their rulers,—every now and then blazing up into desperate revolt,—and peopled by two races bent upon each other's extermination.

I now proceed to my remaining topic: The hope and salvation of a country thus rent by social and domestic dissensions.

Unquestionably, something may be done by a wise, firm, yet kind administration of the Government. Let us not be ingenious to deceive ourselves. Superficial enthusiasts, office-seekers, and sycophants may say what they will, may cry, "Peace, peace, when there is no peace," but it is perfectly certain that the heart—the real, representative heart of the South is not loyal to the General Government, neither indeed can be until it is changed. Look at plain facts. These people have been fighting for what they believed to be their inalienable rights; and they have poured out their riches like dirt and their blood like water. They are conquered; but does this change their sentiments and feelings? Force has been often tried in religion. It has made multitudes of hypocrites, but never a single convert; nor is it otherwise in politics. It is sheer downright folly to suppose that defeat has produced loyalty and love in those whose deep, I had almost said whose religious conviction is, that they suffer for truth and freedom.

If we love our country, our whole country, let us pray to God that our rulers may be endowed with that "wisdom which is from above," which "is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits;" with a wisdom which may rightly solve the problems of the present crisis,—problems compared with which the setting of squadrons and fighting of battles are easy and common achievements.

But after all, how little can mere human wisdom do for this convulsed and agitated land; nor have I any hope for our beloved country except as the principles of the religion of Jesus shall become the controlling element in the conduct of our rulers. No Government can be either permanent or beneficial, while the people and those in authority over them are living in rebellion against the Moral Governor of the universe. The whole power of the best jurisprudence is impotent to repress a single movement of human depravity. Its virtue will be wasted on the surface. It can never penetrate the recesses of the soul, and dry up the fountains of evil there, and create confidence and love and true loyalty in the millions of hearts which have been alienated. They are the

friends neither of the South nor of the North who, at a period like the present, counsel sternness and tyranny.—Such measures can produce only “forced hallelujahs,” sullen submission to a hated yoke; and these are not what the crisis demands.

“Non tali auxilio, nec defensoribus istis,
Tempus eget.”

It is the Gospel, my brethren, which is the hope of our land. It is only through the influence of the religion of Jesus that wars can cease, and all those lusts from which wars come, and which are so fed and invigorated by war that they survive the shock of arms and cling like a curse to a nation, long after armies have been disbanded and the noise of battle has passed away.

I know, alas, that when I say this, the infidel and the scoffer will be ready with an answer which causes me to blush and hang my head in shame. They will remind me that some of the blackest pages of human history are the records of those fierce wars which have desolated the earth in the name of religion. I open these sacred pages, and I hear angels announcing, “Peace on earth and good will among men,” when the adorable Redeemer entered upon his mission of love. In that Redeemer I behold the incarnation of love. His sermons were the accents of love. His exhortations were the beseechings of love.—His miracles were the interpositions of love. His tears were the sobbings and gushings of love. His death was the consummation, the glorification of love.

I close this volume and turn to the annals of the church so miscalled, and what do I find? I see the earth smoking with blood shed by the professed disciples of that Redeemer; the legacy of peace which he bequeathed to mankind converted into a “roll written within and without with mourning, lamentation and woe;” his representatives carrying fire and sword over the fairest portions of that world which he died to reclaim to holiness and charity and philanthropy; and the cross on which he expired exclaiming, “Father, forgive them,” no longer lifted up as an ensign to gather the nations in sympathy and affection, but flaming as a banner to marshal hostile

armies, to madden hordes of ruffians with frenzy and hatred, to precipitate them upon the work of slaughter, havoc, extermination, to mingle every rank, age, sex, in promiscuous massacre and carnage.

But let not the infidel and the scoffer triumph. The religion of Jesus detests these deeds of darkness and crime. Jesus came to make peace upon the earth, to teach men that they are brothers, to recapitulate the whole human family under their common Father. And wherever the spirit of his Gospel is disseminated, there war and all its blighting passions will give way to the soft but irresistible triumphs of celestial grace and love.

John the Baptist first began to preach "the kingdom of heaven," the reign of Messiah among men; and how very profoundly interesting to us at this hour, is the language of Malachi as to the effects of his ministry. "He shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse." It is here predicted that before the appearance of the Herald, Judea should be rent and torn by domestic animosities; and this prophecy was strikingly fulfilled. After a sanguinary conflict, the Jews were subjugated by the Romans. While some of the vanquished accepted offices of profit from their haughty victors, and some enlisted under the imperial eagles, others clung to their old hereditary pride and prejudices. Perhaps there never glowed in the human bosom such hatred as the Hebrews felt for their despised pagan conquerors; they, therefore, scorned those of their sons and brethren who, through policy or for filthy lucre, consented to any alliance with them. The consequence was that children were against parents and parents against children. These family feuds were so criminal in the sight of God, that he threatened fresh curses upon the people, if they persisted in them. But it is promised that John's ministry should allay these asperities. He was to be the Apostle of repentance; and true repentance will subdue every vindictive feeling. He cried, "Behold the Lamb of God!"—pointing to that atonement, the magic power of which disarms every unhallowed passion, and to that perfect pattern of meekness, patience, gentleness, which

is to absorb the admiration of the Christian, and to be the model for his character and life.

Here, then, in its twilight, the Gospel was to put forth a benevolent potency in removing the very acrimonies of which I have spoken, and to bring the world to the obedience of the law of love. Hence, after quoting the prediction of Malachi, the angel added, (Luke i: 17,) "and to turn the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." Nor can we take the most superficial glance at the spirit and tendency of the Christian system without perceiving that it is the antidote to all "hatred, variance, emulation, wrath and strife."

In the first place, the Gospel descends to the heart, to that deep and desperate depravity from which war and all its curses flow, as from a perennial fountain. Philosophers, statesmen, reformers overlook this lodged, rooted, moral disease; and, therefore, all their theories—whether based upon good government, or education, or commercial intercourse—have proved, and will prove to be only abortions. The remedy is good and ought to effect a cure; but the system is so disordered that its efficacy is utterly defeated. The machinery is complete; but the springs have no elasticity, the wheels will not revolve.—“What the law could not do because it was weak through the flesh, God has done by the mission of his Son.” In this passage it is affirmed that the degeneracy of our nature renders impotent the lessons and enforcements even of God’s perfect law; what a mockery, then, must be all the appliances of human wisdom which do not recognize and correct something radically wrong in humanity. The Gospel deals directly with this inherent depravity. It carries its searching, sanctifying energy to the very source and origin of the baneful disorder. God declares that war and its pernicious passions shall cease to afflict the world, only as Messiah’s kingdom shall prevail.—“They shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation shall not lift up the sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.” “They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the

knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek, and his rest shall be glorious. The jealousy also of Ephraim shall depart, and the enmity of Judah shall be no more. Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim. The greaves of the armed warrior in the conflict and the garments rolled in much blood, shall be a burning, even fuel for the fire. For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called *The Prince of Peace.*" Such are some of the magnificent promises of Revelation; and Reason and Facts are in unison with Revelation.

I say Reason; for men are alienated from each other because they are estranged from God. Coming from the hands of the Essential Love and Goodness; not created separately, but "made of one blood," and deriving their being from a common parentage; it would seem that men must cherish an instinctive affection for each other, must be bound together by benevolent sympathies, must feel a delightful complacency in each other's happiness, and abhor the very thought of inflicting misery upon each other. In the contrast to all this exhibited by the present condition of our race, we have a phenomenon so inexpressibly dreadful that it defies all our attempts to explain it, or to reconcile it with the goodness of an Almighty Moral Ruler. It can be referred only to that primal mysterious catastrophe to which the Scriptures ascribe all the wretched disorders of the world. Foolish men cavil and object when we speak of *The Fall*. But call it what you will, here surely is a terrible fall; a frightful degradation; a fall from God, from our original glory, and into a black abyss of sin and corruption, so that "violence covers the earth" which was formed to be the abode of peace and love.

The word Religion (*re-ligio*) means a binding us back to God, and thus to one another; and in every genuine revival of religion, one of the first fruits is the restoration of these severed bonds. In families, in communities, those who had been long embittered are then seen to em-

brace each other. And thus it will be over the entire world, as the celestial influence of the religion of Jesus shall be diffused. It must be so; for the Gospel changes our nature; quells the selfishness, the pride, the ambition, the lust of wealth and power, all the baleful passions in which war commences, and by which its evils are perpetuated. The doctrines, precepts, examples, spirit of the Gospel,—above all, its great central truth embodied in a Crucified Redeemer, are fraught with love, kindness, mutual forbearance, forgiveness, tenderness; they must, therefore, produce peace on earth and good will among men. Where Jesus is truly received, there can be no hostile rivalries, no cruelties, no injustice, no restless alienations, no jealousies, no hatreds. Nor in the heavenly light of his teachings and example, can our minds be blunted to the hideous evils of war by the pomp, the parade, the decorations in which it dresses itself to impose upon our senses; nor can our imaginations be dazzled by the false and pernicious splendor with which poets and orators have invested it. We shall learn that true greatness—the heroism of the humblest Christian who lives, suffers, dies for truth—as far transcends the renown of the warrior, as the heavens are high above the earth. We will feel that man's true glory is in religion, in virtue, in moral courage, in the subjection of his desires to the will of God, in energy of principle, in inward triumph over passion and prejudice, in humility, in patience, in doing good, in forgiving injuries, in serving God, in imitating Jesus, in becoming the friend and benefactor of the poor, the wronged, the weak, the suffering, the oppressed.

I was right, then, when I affirmed that Revelation and Reason give one testimony as to the peaceful tendency of the Gospel. And had I time, I could easily show that Facts are in harmony with Reason and Revelation. Do not think to refute this assertion by a recital of the wars which have been waged between Christian nations, or of the hostilities which have lately raged in this land. To such an objection I might reply, that, compared with the atrocities of ancient warfare and with the ferocity which now consigns to torture and slavery and the most horrid

death the wretched victims of barbarian triumph,—even the evils portrayed in the first part of this discourse are a sort of mercy.

But this is not my answer. What I affirm is, that if nations still learn war and lift up the sword against nations, it is because they have only the form of godliness while they deny its power; and because those among their people who are truly Christ's violate their solemn vows and obligations. No nation has ever yet been brought under the vital influence of the religion of Jesus. But a nation is only an aggregate of individuals. And wherever an individual has been truly regenerated, and lives under the power of the Gospel, there you will find a mind, a conscience, a heart which revolt from war as a horrible thing; there you have a man who detests war as war; who will suffer imprisonment, poverty, the most shocking death, rather than engage in a war of conquest or ambition; and who in a war for freedom or self-defence (and such wars I admit are justifiable) will seek to mitigate human misery, and will long and pray for peace as an inestimable blessing.

But it is time for me to bring these remarks to a close. My beloved hearers, though in great weakness, yet out of a full heart I have addressed you to-day; and I beseech you to ponder these truths to which you have listened, whether they please you or not.

I am aware that some of you will regard all I have been saying as the idle reverie of an enthusiast. To hope that the South and the North can ever be reconciled is, you tell me, the chimera of a mere dreamer, a romantic visionary. A dreamer! a visionary! So then, with all your professions, you are, it seems, infidels at heart. Is not the Gospel 'the wisdom of God and the power of God'—wisdom where all human expedients are foolishness—power over the powerful, power where all else is powerless? When some one opposed the cause of Missions, scouting the idea that preaching could be any match for the hardness and corruption of the heathen, Mr. Newton replied, "Sir, that which could convert me can convert anybody." And this is what I now say. That Gospel which could change me, which could change you, can

change anybody. If it can bring the carnal heart, which "is *enmity itself against God*," to love God, to delight in him,—O never tell me there is anything too hard for it; never bid me despair that I shall yet close my dying eyes upon a nation re-united, upon States dwelling together in harmony, and under new auspices, with God's selectest blessing, setting out afresh to fulfill their high, glorious, and common destiny.

After all, however, it is not so much of the hatreds between the South and the North that I have spoken, as of the unhallowed passions which have so long been marring the kindly charities of our social and domestic intercourse. Are these too strong for the Gospel? Let me hope, now, when peace has come, that the spirit of peace will also come. At Talavera, after a day of furious conflict, the French and English soldiers stacked their arms, and repairing to a stream which flowed between them, they passed their cups freely from one to another, with the common feelings of exhausted nature. Is there not "a fountain open for sin and all corruption," to which, laying aside our animosities, we will come in the cool of the day, and open our hearts to better thoughts, to those sentiments which conscious weakness and misery ought to awaken in our bosoms?

Whatever difference of opinion may exist as to the revolution attempted by our Southern brethren, all must allow this plea,—that they believed they were battling for their rights, for rights which were claimed by our forefathers when they threw off their allegiance to England. But there can be no excuse for us if we now foster these antipathies and resentments.

No matter how devoted had been our attachment to our whole country, (in me, love for that country was one of the strongest instincts of my earliest childhood, and it grew with my growth and strengthened with my strength) yet before this unnatural struggle had been fully inaugurated, some of us saw enough at the North, and at the South, to lead us to believe that all our cherished hopes for the perpetuity of the Union were doomed;—that the time had come when God meant to make of one people two nations, who should dwell side by side in comity

and alliance. We now know that we were mistaken.—The dreadful arbitrament of battle has decided this great question. We stand to-day in the presence of facts which must be accepted as the decree of Heaven. And, now, if we love the South, let us seek “the things that make for peace.” The Southern States need repose. If honorable terms of reunion are proffered them, old memories will be freshened, and they will be won back to loyalty. Let no one of us by our conduct or language, cause suspicion to rest upon their sincerity, and thus arm their enemies with pretexts for stripping them of all their rights, and for keeping them under military subjection. Rest assured, the South craves, at this hour, not our bad passions, but our generous sympathies, our fervent prayers, our firm and wise mediation.

Let all who truly love the Union now bury past dissensions in oblivion. Recollect that schemes for the dissolution of that Union have been cherished and may again be cherished in other quarters besides the South. Nor is there any security for it, but in the suppression of those selfish and malignant feelings, which subvert all true love for our institutions, and in opening our hearts to that true patriotism which, loving our country, embraces all who will be the friends of that country.

Lastly, we are Christians; and as such, especially in times like these which are now passing over us, we must feel the obligation resting upon us all to cultivate kindness, forbearance, mutual candor in the interpretation of each other’s conduct and motives, a charity which “beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.”

When a part of the people of Israel were enslaved in Babylon, and amid the insults of their profane conquerors, who cried “Sing us one of the songs of Zion,” there were, no doubt, many who instigated thoughts of hatred and revenge. But, by his prophet Jeremiah, God said to them, “Seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captives, and pray to the Lord for it.” If such was their duty to a foreign land, is it not ours to the country of our birth and for which

our fathers fought and died? How can we so certainly promote the prosperity of the North, the South, the East, and the West, as by diffusing the power of that Gospel which is the only safeguard of our common rights and liberties? How can we more surely please our Heavenly Father, than by nourishing among ourselves the temper of those who are "followers of him as dear children?" How can we so nobly illustrate the religion of Jesus, as by shewing that it has power to achieve a victory which turns into contempt all the triumphs of warriors and heroes, a victory over ourselves, over our prejudices and passions?

My brethren, let us enter into these thoughts; let us collect them; and examining ourselves by them, let us see what are the sentiments of our hearts,—whether they are congenial with the Gospel—in unison with the Prince of Peace? If they are not, wo unto us! Let us not be affecting any horror at the atrocities of war; we are nourishing all these atrocities in our own bosoms. "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer." All the rage and cruelty which crimson the field of battle, we are, here, on this day of humiliation, in this sanctuary, secretly nurturing in our hearts,—thus wronging our souls, grieving the Holy Spirit, and, unless we repent, exposing ourselves to the wrath of God, now and forever.

O my brethren, my dearly beloved brethren, let not these things be. "I beseech you, as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul." Let us imitate him who, "when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, threatened not; but committed himself unto him that judgeth righteously." Let us hear that voice which, from the top of the cross, from the midst of the throne, is saying to us, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you. That ye may be the children of your Father who is in heaven." Let us go home resolving to cherish in our own hearts and to shed around us, in the church, in our families, in the community, the gentle

spirit of peace and love. "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice; and be ye kind one to another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven you."

* Preached, June 1st, 1865, a Day of National Fasting, Humiliation and Prayer. Published by request, at the time, and dedicated "To the Young Men's City Mission Society of the Seventh Baptist Church, by their affectionate brother and pastor."



Sermon Twelfth.

STRENGTH AS OUR DAY.

“As thy day, so shall thy strength be.”—DEUTERONOMY xxxiii: 25.

THE future is all uncertain, but the past is ours, that is safe so far as we have improved it; and it is a noble faculty by which we can run our thoughts backwards and gather wisdom from our experiences; even our failures, errors and sins teaching us useful lessons.

“Let the dead past bury its dead;” but how little of the past can die. No, it is wisdom to “talk with our past hours,” though they have been wasted; to review the periods of life which are gone; gone irreparably,—for no effort can restore what we have lost by neglect; gone irrevocably,—for no power, not omnipotence itself, can overtake the stream that is bearing from us so many treasures of time, opportunity, advantages which have enriched others, but which we foolishly threw away.

After all, however, we must not brood too sorrowfully over the past. Our great business is with the future, and to preparation for this, our text summons us. There is something very pathetic in the parting address of the Apostle at Miletus. “And now behold I go bound in the Spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there, save only that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. But none of these things move me.” Bound for the New Jerusalem, it is thus the Christian bids farewell to each year, each day; not knowing what the future may bring forth; certain only of this, that temp-

tations, conflicts, discouragements, reverses, afflictions, sickness, death await him. And if you ask how we may look into the future not only without dismay, but with calmness, with immovable assurance, the secret is in the passage just read; it is a firm habitual confidence in this promise, "Thy shoes shall be iron and brass; and as thy day so shall thy strength be."

I. Upon reading these words, the first truth they suggest and which they emphatically teach is, that we are utter weakness, and need supernatural succors every day to sustain us in the arduous life to which we are called as Christians.

With this great truth you are all familiar, but you are not familiar with its greatness. It is one of those truths which are so readily conceded that they lose the force of truth; and hence the frequency and earnestness with which the Holy Spirit repeats his admonitions upon this subject.

As to the unregenerate, it is constantly declared that they are without spiritual ability or discernment; that blinded and weakened by the power of corruption, they can neither cancel past guilt nor extricate themselves from present depravity. "When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly."

But the Christian is equally dependent. The difference between him and others is not that he has an outfit of strength in himself, but that he has renounced his own ability and "taken hold" of God's strength. It is thus that, by faith, "out of weakness he is made strong," and exclaims, "Blessed be the Lord my strength, which teacheth my hands to war and my fingers to fight." As the branch cannot bear fruit in itself except it abide in the vine, so he can be fruitful only by abiding in Jesus.—His language is, "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." "In the Lord have I righteousness and strength." "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me."

And this dependence is as entire in little as it is in great things. "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to *think anything* as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of

God." It is Mr. Newton who says that the grace of God is as necessary to create the right temper in a Christian, on the breaking of a China plate as on the death of an only son. In the routine of everyday business, in the trivial round of domestic life there may be an ordeal of faith and meekness and patience severer than that encountered in more open conflicts with evil. It is, in fact, under his own roof, at his own fireside, removed from the checks and observations and motives of the world, that a man shews what he really is. Home is especially the sphere in which the true elements of female character come out. In the church, in the community, many a woman adorns the Gospel she professes, who yet has not learned "to shew piety at home;" who in her family betrays too much of Martha's temper, is somewhat irritable and querulous, wants the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit which "in the sight of God" (and of her husband, too) is "of great price." She is a mother in Israel at the Orphan Asylum, a paragon at the Dorcas Society, a martyr at the Hospital, a saint at the prayer meeting; but at home—O the broken china plate!

"My strength is made perfect in weakness." Conscious weakness is the condition upon which grace is vouchsafed us. "When I am weak, then am I strong." Proud self-confidence disarms the Christian; his invincible locks are shorn off the moment he reposes on his own self-sufficiency. It is only when conscious impotence keeps him looking to Jesus, that he can run with patience the race set before him, and find spiritual energy infused into his soul. "*Without me ye can do nothing.*" Jesus does not say that without him we can do but little; he says that we can do nothing without him, we are perfectly helpless. Without his aid the enemies of our souls will be too much for us. It was to his own chosen apostles that Jesus said, "Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation." And, for my part, the more I study the biographies of holy men, and reflect upon the deserted bowers of Eden, and the vacant thrones and shattered harps of heaven, the more do I shudder at the terrible power of temptation. But what then? Do the Scriptures give any countenance to the pretext of the wicked, who plead their

weakness as an excuse for sin? Not at all. They assure us that "God is faithful who will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able to bear, but will, with the temptation, also make a way to escape, that we may be able to bear it." They point us to him who whispers to his servant when entering his trials, "Satan hath desired to have thee that he may sift thee as wheat, but I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not." The admonition always is, that we are feeble, but that we have an almighty ally who was in all points tempted as we are, and who is "able to succor them that are tempted."

If the Christian needs the Saviour's aid in temptation, he is equally dependent in the day of adversity and affliction. It is only by the grace of God that he can be what he ought then to be, that he can bow meekly before the Chastener and reap the peaceable fruits of righteousness. The wax may be melted again and again, unless the signet be stamped upon it, there will be no image left. And so the heart may be softened by affliction after affliction, but unless God engrave truth upon it, all will soon be cold, hard, impressionless as ever. We will not only lose the object taken from us, but we will suffer a far sorer bereavement; we will lose the affliction. Brethren, we can do without many things which we think necessary, but we cannot afford to do without chastisement. I have been for twenty years familiar with death-beds, and I have heard the dying lament many things which the living covet. I have heard them deplore the influence of prosperity, the seductions of worldly friendships, and the snares of wealth, ambition, pleasure; but never have I heard a dying man regret one thing which we all dread—that thing is affliction. We cannot dispense with affliction. Paul must have a thorn in the flesh. Some of us must have a thorn in the spirit. God must call for a cloud to darken many of our days. Sometimes when the child of God is saying, "I shall die in my nest," his heavenly Father must send a storm to lay him and his nest low in the dust. And if left to ourselves, we will murmur, we will faint under these rebukes. It is only when Christ's grace is vouchsafed, that either Paul or we can

abide the ordeal with unshaken faith, with exulting, soul-enriching confidence.

And these remarks apply to every trial of our loyalty and love, to every pressure upon the heart, every season of despondency and depression. To the holiest there will come periods of dejection. It may be an evil heart, or domestic sorrow, or poverty, or physical derangement, or a diseased imagination, or spiritual darkness, or——in short, each heart knoweth its own bitterness. There are times when every Christian exclaims with the Psalmist, "O my God, my soul is cast down within me." Now, to yield to this temper would be a most unworthy weakness; it would relax all our spiritual energies; it would dishonor Jesus; it would cause the wicked to triumph.—"As with a sword in my bones," says David, "mine enemies reproach me, while they say daily unto me, Where is thy God?" But abandoned to his own resources, the strongest will find his heart and strength fail. It is easy to tell him, that he ought to rise above this infirmity.—He will answer with Job, "I also could speak as ye do, if your soul were in my soul's stead."

No arguments, no expostulations will avail anything with this gloom upon his spirits. A man must go out of himself, he must repair to God, in whom are all his springs of light and strength. "Unto thee, O my strength will I sing, for God is my defence and the God of my mercy." "From the ends of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed, lead me to the rock that is higher than I. For thou hast been a shelter for me, and a strong tower from the enemy. I will abide in thy tabernacle forever. I will trust in the covert of thy wings."

I have been speaking of a Christian's experience under present trials; his sorest conflict, however, is often with his anticipations of the future. And to these fears the text especially addresses itself; its assurances are prospective. "Thy shoes shall be iron and brass, and as thy day so shall thy strength be."

In opening this discourse, I alluded to the faculty by which we can send our thoughts back into the past; but God has bestowed upon man a still nobler power, and one

which more clearly attests his immortality; he "looks before" as well as "after." Brutes live only in the present, man connects himself with the past and with the time to come. This communion with the future is a powerful stimulus to noble exertions; it animates us to relinquish ephemeral gratifications, that we may secure permanent good; it inspires us to forget the things that are behind and to press toward the mark for the prize of our high calling; to welcome toil, sacrifices, reproach, persecution, that we may receive the crown of righteousness; and amidst the thickest night it cheers us with that hope which "still travels on nor leaves us till we die."

But while this faculty, by which we mingle ourselves with the future, is thus useful, it is often the source of great anxiety and distress. When fortifying our souls against fear, the Apostle assures us that "things to come are ours." When enumerating the foes which threaten to separate us from the love of God, he speaks with emphasis of "things to come;" and with reason. For Fear is the wildest and most creative of all the passions, and what spectres can she not conjure up to haunt the obscurity before us. Through her baneful influence the future seems all shrouded in funereal drapery; and sad misgivings, gloomy presentiments of impending evil agitate and appal the soul. Under these ominous sinkings of the inmost heart, we are really more helpless than when pressed by any incumbent, and therefore definite, measurable calamity. Read in the Book of Job that account of the spirit which passed before Eliphaz. "Fear came upon me and trembling which made all my bones to shake. Then a spirit passed before my face; the hair of my flesh stood up; it stood still but I could not discern the form thereof." Never was anything more sublime; and it is its indistinctness that lends such terror to this mysterious being. Where we cannot see, imagination has full scope; and her portentous bodings fill the mind with awe and dismay so much worse than any real anguish, by how much the uncertain, shadowy infinite is more powerful in mastering the reason than a peril which is known, certain, and palpable. It was the vague prospect of persecution and suffering which broke down the courage even of

Elijah, who had braved Ahab to his face. It was the agony looming up before him which convulsed the soul of the Redeemer with strong crying and tears, causing him to exclaim, "O my Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from me." And it is when dark and undefined anticipations cast their black shadows over our hearts, that strength and fortitude melt away, and we need those especial succors which can come only from God. "I was troubled on every side; without were fightings, within were fears. Nevertheless God that comforteth them that are cast down comforteth us." Jesus himself appeared to John in his desolate island, but he was not recognized. "When I saw him I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not." And thus it is with us. The future approaches with its ministries of love and wisdom; but we know not its mission, and our hearts sink down in terror, till a heavenly hand touches us and a heavenly voice dissipates our fears.

II. We are weak and constantly require divine support. This is the first truth taught by the text. Let us now pass to the second reflection suggested by the passage. I refer to God's economy as to the supply of needed strength.

Abundant are the treasures of grace in Christ Jesus; and in all ages the pious have looked directly to God for strength. "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." "In the day when I cried, thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul." "Cast thy burden upon the Lord and he will sustain thee." "Call upon me in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee and thou shalt glorify me." Rich are the provisions of heavenly succor;—so munificent, indeed, that the Gospel is compared to a royal banquet.—But in the allowance imparted to us, God consults his own wisdom and not our wishes. I have just now spoken of our proneness to forestall the future. This propensity is seen every day in temporal matters, in the universal desire to accumulate. It is not confined, however, to the affairs of the world. In spiritual things also we are anxious to lay in store for future emergencies, to amass

strength against the day of trial. This would be our plan; but it is not God's method, he sees fit to hold us to a very different economy.

Even in the support of our bodies, we are required to recognize God's immediate interposition. "Thou openest thy hand and satisfiest the desire of every living thing." He has but to shut his hand and all life would at once perish; food would not nourish us; air and water would become leprous elements of death. "Give us this day our daily bread," such is the petition we are to offer; and not as a form, but with the imploring earnestness of suppliant pensioners on the sovereign power of heaven. The rich man may say, "I do not want;" but amidst the mutability of all earthly fortunes, who dare affirm that he shall always be superior to want. One man alone I hear exclaiming, "I shall not want;" and who is this? it is David. And upon what does he base this confidence? upon his royal revenues? Not at all. It is upon the ever wakeful providence of God. "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want."

In replenishing our spiritual necessities God is, if possible, even more rigorous. It pleased the Father that all fullness should dwell in Christ, not in us; and he will vouchsafe no supply until we renounce all hope from ourselves, and acknowledge that all our resources are in him. Paul entreats again and again that the thorn which stung him may be removed. No, says the Saviour, that cannot be. I have planted that thorn there for thy good. But, Lord, it is the messenger of Satan which is buffeting me. No matter, I often use Satan's messengers to do my errands. The thorn I will not remove, but I will do for you something much better; "my grace is sufficient for you." Give me strength, says the Christian, that I may be equipped for future assaults, exposures, afflictions, ordeals. No, God replies, but I will confer a greater blessing. "As thy day so shall thy strength be."

Mr. Cecil, when just setting out in the ministry, received from his dying mother an answer which he never forgot, and which cheered and sustained him in many a dark hour. Standing by her pillow, just before she expired, he said, "Do you not tremble at the thought of

entering an unknown world? How do you know what you shall meet there?" "It is no matter," she answered, "what I shall meet there. He hath said, 'When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and when thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be burned; I will strengthen thee, I will uphold thee'—that is enough."

Christian, you must learn this lesson. It is no matter what trials, conflicts, sorrows you may have to encounter—God has promised strength proportionate to your day. That is enough.

Before this audience, I need not stop to prove that every page of the Bible confirms what I have said as to the economy under which we are placed. And we have another testimony. This assertion is abundantly attested by all Christians. Every man's life is to him the most interesting biography; and every child of God has, in his own history, the verification of the truth I am affirming. You, my beloved brethren—I appeal to each of you.—Review the past. Recall the seasons when the Lord was your strength and your shield; when you were brought low and he helped you. As you look back upon your sorrows, distresses, temptations, fears, does not each of you exclaim, with adoring gratitude, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped me." "Having obtained help of God I continue until this time." "Unless the Lord had been my help, my soul had dwelt in silence." "I will sing aloud of thy power and of thy mercy; for thou hast been my defence and refuge in the day of trouble." "Because thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice."

And this has been the experience of all who have put their trust in God; they have all carried in themselves the record of their own helplessness and of his interposition in their extremities. The spirits of just men of all ages and countries now made perfect; and the cloud of witnesses now compassing us about,—those who once trod these courts and filled these seats, the former members and pillars of this church whose beloved forms are

sleeping around these walls*—there was not one of these who did not feel himself to be a bruised reed and smoking flax, not one who did not set up Ebenezer after Ebenezer all the way from his spiritual cradle to his grave, not one who did not again and again exclaim, "If the Lord had not been on my side, then had the waters covered me, then had the streams gone over my head." "I cried unto the Lord in my distress, and he delivered me." "I will bless the Lord at all times, his praise shall continually be in my mouth, my soul shall make her boast in the Lord, the humble shall hear thereof and be glad. O magnify the Lord with me and let us exalt his name together. I sought the Lord and he heard me and delivered me from all my fears."

Yes, this is God's method. He observes a rich but settled economy; he gives us strength for our day, but he gives us no more. And in this dispensation, as in all his dealings with us, there is the wisdom and love of a Father who is consulting our highest profit, our truest happiness. He thus keeps us humble and prayerful; he thus educates us to live by faith; he thus constantly freshens our love and gratitude, and teaches us that he is a very present help in time of trouble. It is when crying, "Lord, save, or I perish," that Peter feels the everlasting arms around him. It is when almost in despair under the consciousness of corruption, that Paul breaks out into that shout of victory, "I thank God through Jesus Christ."

Yes, God thus exercises the most wholesome discipline over our characters, making them vigorous and athletic. And he does more. He thus establishes permanent joy and peace in our souls. Brethren, a whining, puling, moping, croaking religion is a poor recommendation of the Gospel. The best thing God can do with all spiritual hypocondriacs is to kill them and take them to heaven at once. And none are so prone to this temper as those who live upon emotions, frames and excitements. Give me

* This sermon was preached, January, 1860, on a visit to Beaufort, S. C., the author's birthplace, and in the church where he had been pastor at the commencement of his ministry.

the Christian who hourly lives upon God ; not even upon God's gifts, but upon God himself. Our feelings are like the waves which dance and sparkle, but are ever fluctuating, changing, and when the breeze subsides are wholly gone. God's truth and faithfulness "are a great deep." They resemble the ocean itself ; always there—vast, fathomless, sublime, the same in its majesty, its inexhaustible fullness, yesterday, to-day and forever ; the same in calm and in storm, by day and by night ; changeless while generations come and pass ; everlasting while ages are rolling away.

III. You see, then, our helplessness and God's economy in the adjustment of needed succors. Let us now look for a moment more directly at the promise in our text. We ought all often to ponder this assurance, and to live more upon the strength and consolation it can impart. For there is in our hearts I know not what lurking unbelief in God's faithfulness. Nothing can be more touching than God's complaint of this want of confidence. "Sing, O heavens, and be joyful, O earth, and break forth into singing, O mountains ; for the Lord hath comforted his people, and will have mercy upon his afflicted. But Zion said, the Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me. Can a woman forget her sucking child that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb ? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold I have engraven thee upon the palms of my hands ; thy walls are continually before me." Let us guard against a temper which thus dishonors God. Let us understand our religion, and learn the sacred logic of that glorious hope which thus argues : "If when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled we shall be saved by his life ;" "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things ?" "In fierce storms," said an old seaman, "we can do but one thing, there is only one way ; we must put the ship in a certain position and keep her there." This, Christian, is what you must do. Sometimes, like Paul, you can see neither

sun nor stars, and no small tempest lies on you ; and then you can do but one thing, there is only one way. Reason cannot help you ; past experiences give you no light ; even prayer fetches no consolation. Only a single course is left. You must put your soul in one position and keep it there. You must stay upon the Lord ; and, come what may—winds, waves, cross seas, thunder, lightning, frowning rocks, roaring breakers—no matter what, you must lash yourself to the helm, and hold fast your confidence in God's faithfulness, his covenant engagement, his everlasting love in Christ Jesus.

Looking at the promise as recorded in the passage before us, we must all feel at once that it assures the Christian of his perseverance. A man who flies in his dream will find that he only dreamed about flying, and so those who flatter themselves with the doctrine of the saints' perseverance, while they live in worldliness and indolence, will one day deplore an infatuation equalled only by their guilt. A child of God perseveres, will persevere in a life of obedience. If his enduring to the end depended upon his own strength, he might well despair ; but the same grace which called him continues to urge him onwards and upwards. We read of the martyrs, and are filled with admiration of the faith which sustained them on the scaffold and amid the flames. In my poor judgment, however, the power of that faith is more illustriously displayed in the protracted life-struggle of every faithful Christian, in his afflictions, persecutions, solitary wrestlings, frailties, tears, discouragements, temptations, in the austere conflicts and triumphs—not of a few moments after which the axe and fire terminate the strife,—but of long years, and amid things which wear and waste the spirit more than years. Well is it for us that God does not put the stock of grace into our hands, for we should soon be broken merchants. He takes the salvation of his people into his own hands. And in his keeping, all is forever safe ; he not only confers the succors needed for the present, but he pledges himself to protect us against all which can ultimately ruin us. "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me ; and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never

perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.' "I the Lord will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not, I will help thee." "And as thy day so shall thy strength be."

The promise in the text assures the Christian of heavenly guidance. "He led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation." Instead of leading his people from Egypt directly to the promised land, God commanded them to turn aside, and go through the wilderness of Paran. They often had to retrace their steps. Their way was circuitous, intricate, over regions of drought and barrenness, and through nations who incessantly assailed them with deadly hostility. Yet this was "the right way;" and during all the journey that august banner of fire and cloud hung over them, to guide their feet and animate their courage. And thus it is now with the child of God. The way in which he is led often seems strange, is often dark, inscrutable, and thro' stern conflicts. "Lead me in a plain path because of mine enemies." "Lead me in thy truth and teach me, for thou art the God of my salvation." "O send out thy light and thy truth, let them lead me." "Thou hast delivered my soul from death, wilt thou not deliver my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the light of the living?" Such is his prayer, nor is it in vain.

But God's way is not our way. The blind are brought by a way they knew not, in paths they had not known. "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go, I will guide thee with mine eye." "What I do thou knowest not now, but *thou shalt know hereafter.*" And then, O then, when we review the dealings of God,—while all shall together magnify the riches of grace and mercy,—each will find in his own experience a peculiar theme for everlasting gratitude, admiration, adoration as—no tear dimming his eye—no cloud obscuring the retrospect—he shall remember all the way the Lord his God led him, and shall see in his whole life the history of folly, perfidy, perverseness constantly arrested and controlled by ever wakeful wisdom, faithfulness and love.

The promise before us contains a third assurance, it assures the Christian that he shall be invigorated for every duty. Brethren, life is passing, youth goes, strength decays. But duty performed, work done for God, this abides forever, this alone is imperishable. Let us remember this and let the thought arm us for every sacrifice.—Here is this difference between the service of Christ and of sin. At a distance the latter cheats us with promises most fair and seductive, only to shed guilt into our consciences and bitterness into our souls. God permits his precepts to seem grievous and formidable in the prospect, that he may thus try our sincerity and faith; but in keeping them there is great reward.

Through what an ordeal was Abraham called to pass. What seemingly unanswerable pleas might he not have brought from nature, from religion, from his jealousy for the character of God among the surrounding nations.—But he staggered not. He gave glory to Jehovah by a faith which drew upon him for strength to meet the fearful hour. Nor can language describe, nor thought conceive his transports as he descended from the mountain.

God will never be outdone by any of us. Let us only have confidence in him, and we shall be strengthened with might according to his glorious power. Who is sufficient for these things? “My grace is sufficient for thee.” “All men forsook me; notwithstanding the Lord stood by me, and strengthened me.” “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.”

Faith, mighty Faith the promise eyes
And looks to that alone;
Laughs at impossibilities
And says, It shall be done.

Other thoughts crowd upon me, for the more I examine the text the more exceeding great and precious I find it, the more inexhaustible its exuberance; but it is unnecessary for me to say more. There it is; there the promise stands; its foundation deep in the faithfulness and wisdom of Jehovah, its summit bright with beams from the “excellent glory.” There it is. Gather around, my brethren, survey it on every side; contemplate its

height and depth and length and breadth. It is itself the preacher, this morning, and it speaks more eloquently than man or angel. It is not I, it is not any mortal who can utter words to dispel all your fears and cause you to feel the rocky strength of that ground upon which your hopes of salvation are built. It is Jesus, it is the Everlasting Jehovah himself, who speaks to you. A few plain words he breathes into your souls, but what words; what an antidote to every fear, what a refuge in every trouble, what comfort in every affliction, what victory over every temptation. Whether the wave be over us, or be coming, here is a rock to which we may climb and be safe. Strength; God's strength; and God's strength for every day, for all our days. Strength; not inherent in us, but strength imparted to us. Strength in health, to resist its perils; and strength in sickness, to lie meekly in the hands of unerring Wisdom and unchanging Love. Strength in prosperity, to withstand its seductions; and strength in adversity to rise superior to its dangers. Strength for the young Christian; strength for the Christian bearing the burden and heat of the day; and strength for the old Christian in the maturity of faith, rich in experiences and heaven-taught knowledges. Strength, when the passions would allure us; when the cares of business would engross us; when our infirmities would oppress us. Strength while life lasts, and strength in the final fearful struggle. Such is the promise.—Amidst all, through all, God's presence and power and guardianship shall be ours. Amidst all, through all, "as our day so shall our strength be."

My brethren, my beloved brethren, what a promise this. I feel as if I only impaired its glory by my feeble eulogium. No commentary, no human, no seraphic utterances would add anything to these simple brief words. They have in all ages inspired the souls of the children of God. While the world lasts, they will infuse courage into those who are fighting the good fight of faith. And to-day they speak to us; speak of power to do all, of intrepidity to brave all, of patience to suffer all, of fortitude to sacrifice all, of faith to conquer all. They tell us that our own strength and all our hopes from it

will be "as the grass upon the housetops, which withereth before it groweth up, wherewith the mower filleth not his hand, nor he that bindeth sheaves his bosom." And they say, "Trust ye in the Lord forever; for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength. "They that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Zion, which cannot be moved." "Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help." "Fear not, he is with thee, be not dismayed, he is thy God. He will strengthen thee, yea he will help thee; yea he will uphold thee with the right hand of his righteousness. When thou passeth through the waters, he will be with thee; and through the rivers they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flames kindle upon thee."

But I must draw this discourse to a conclusion, nor can I do more than select a fruit or two out of the rich harvest of practical wisdom to be reaped from our subject.

If you have listened to me, you must certainly feel the folly of that temper to which we are all prone, and which is ever lamenting the degeneracy of modern piety as compared with the faith of ancient saints and martyrs.

It is this spirit which Solomon rebukes in that admonition; "Say not thou, What is the cause that the former days were better than these? for thou dost not inquire wisely concerning this." You cannot too carefully study, nor too ardently admire the undaunted heroism which once welcomed the axe and stake and scaffold. We should habitually inflame our zeal by the examples of those whose lives and deaths furnish such an argument for the truth of the Gospel, and such an illustration of its spirit. "Be not slothful but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises."

When, however, you explore the history of these trophies of grace, for the purpose of contrasting their sacrifices and triumphs with the present type of piety, and infer that should the emergency arise, there would not be found the same spirit of undaunted loyalty,—why

then you take up the whole thing amiss, you forget the entire policy of the Holy Spirit. That noble army was composed of men weak and tempted as we are, and of like passions. If they conquered, it was because they were "strong in the grace that is in Jesus Christ." If the hour of conflict were at hand, if persecution should again ravage the church, the same grace would inspire the same indomitable faith and courage. And, O, I do think it would be worth all it would cost, worth all the temporal loss and pain, the enduring of affliction and the spoiling of our goods, once more to witness what hath been witnessed by men and angels upon this earth and among its fallen population;—once more to behold the power of God breaking forth on the right hand and on the left; once more to view riches and honors cheerfully immolated, and precious blood poured forth like water for Jesus; once more to look upon strong men and delicate women standing side by side confronting danger and death with triumphant allegiance; once again to be stirred by the shout of the king in our midst, causing him that is feeble to be as David, and the house of David to be as God, as the angel of the Lord.

Another lesson. See in our subject the true antidote to that spiritual depression which sometimes weighs upon the hearts of the strongest and holiest. There have been many prescriptions for dejection; but the Psalmist discovered only one remedy, and that a specific;—it is a firm confidence in God. Not in his past experiences, nor in his present conscious piety, nor in his resolutions for the future, but in God, in God's unchangeable perfections could he find consolations. "Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me? *Hope thou in God.*" When spars and masts have been bent and shivered like reeds, when the rent canvas is strewing the tempest, and the laboring bark is driving headlong upon an iron-bound coast, there is but one resource. The anchor must leave the ship and grasp the solid earth. And in spiritual storms, when the heart is overwhelmed and ready to despair, hope is "the anchor of the soul sure and steadfast" which must lay hold upon the Rock of Ages. We

are prone to think that in some other sphere of duty, in other circumstances, we could be more cheerful and happy. We must correct this error; we can be happy only when conforming ourselves to the will of God in the sphere we occupy, and when fixing our trust upon him. If earthly sorrows or religious despondency press upon us, let us "cast our burden upon the Lord and he will sustain us." "Cast all your care upon him for he careth for you." If he seems to be angry with us and strikes us, let us fly to him, let us draw near to him. The closer we get the more will the blow be broken.

The truths to which you have listened teach us one other and most important lesson. They reprove and ought to quell the nervous spirit which is always anticipating evil. The cloud is coming; it may pass; but whether it passes or not, what folly to project a conductor and thus attract the bolt sleeping in its folds.

"Take, therefore, no thought for the morrow." When Jesus had finished the Sermon containing these words, the people, we are informed, "were astonished at his doctrine;" and with reason. For "the prudent man foreseeth the evil and turneth aside;" and we are sent to the ant, to learn that wisdom which forecasteth and provideth against the future. It is not of a wise precaution, but of restless, boding, corroding anxieties that Jesus speaks. We ought to banish these from our minds, committing all our ways unto the Lord, saying "Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe."

These distressing solitudes are sinful, they doubt the divine presence and interference. And they are even more foolish than criminal. "Be careful for nothing but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God; and the peace of God which passeth understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Jesus Christ." On the other hand unbelief fills the imagination with apprehensions as irrational as they are painful. For, either the evil dreaded will come, or it will not. If it come, we are assured of grace sufficient for us, of strength as our day. If it does not overtake us, we have

been distressing ourselves wantonly and unnecessarily. In either case we deprive ourselves of present peace and happiness. This I have often observed, that whatever God sends us—sickness, poverty, affliction, death—is sure to bring with it a frame and temper adjusted to the emergency; “the morrow takes thought for itself.” But as there is no promise of support for those troubles which we bring upon ourselves, which we call up to torment us before our time, so there can be no adaptation, physical, moral, or spiritual, to meet them.

O for a simple, child-like unwavering faith in God's promises; a faith tolerant of all things—of all disappointment, sacrifice, suffering, as it reposes calmly upon Jesus. “All will soon be well,” I said to a dying woman, who had endured and was enduring extreme pain. All *will* soon be well?” she replied, “All *is* well, all *is* well.” O for a faith like that; a faith which looks serenely up and exclaims, All is well; All is well; All is well. “I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor” (lest some poor trembling child of God, bowing his head like a bulrush, should invent some danger not included in this catalogue) “nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

My brethren, let us busy ourselves only with the present hour. This alone is ours.

Know'st thou Yesterday, its aim and reason?

Work'st thou well To-day for worthy things?

Calmly wait the Morrow's hidden season

Need'st not fear what hap so e'er it brings.

In heaven neither past nor future can disturb the joy of the redeemed, because God is all in all. And if we with sincerity utter that petition, “Thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven,” God will be all in all to us; past, present, future will have no power to trouble

our celestial peace and joy. Let us faithfully discharge our present duty; clear decided activity in that is man's only happiness. To-morrow will bring its own duties, and strength for those duties. Let us, with faith and meekness, bear our present trials and sorrows; confiding all that may come to him who hath said, "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof," "My grace is sufficient for you;" committing all the future, without one anxious thought, one lurking fear, to his care, who each day accurately measures out to his children the afflictions and tears which are needed, and as accurately measures out strength for each day.

Let us rejoice that all our times—times of sickness and health—of poverty and wealth—of temptation and triumph—of prosperity and adversity—of grief and gladness—of life and death—that all are in the hands of such Compassion, Tenderness, unerring, unchanging, almighty Love. The billow looks dark and frowning as it comes on; but be not dismayed; when it breaks it will sparkle and shine all over with the love of God. "All these things are against me;" unbelieving and unworthy was that thought in the patriarch. Still more faithless and dishonoring to Jesus is it in you. Banish it forever; and *know* although you cannot *see* the hidden harmony, that all things will work, all things must work, all things are working together for your real good. Have faith in God. The question is one not of strength, but of faith. Some things may now be sad and inscrutable as the grave, yet have faith in God who will one day bid an angel roll the stone away. "Hast thou not known, hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall; but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint."

“Now may the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, establish, strengthen, settle you. To him be glory and dominion forever and ever. AMEN.”



Sermon Thirteenth.

THE GOSPEL STIFLED BY COVETOUSNESS.

“—AND the deceitfulness of riches choke the word and he becometh unfruitful.”—MATT. xiii: 22.

THE interpretation of this parable teaches us a truth which lies deep in the philosophy of our nature. We see here that the prosperity of a sermon depends far more on the ear of him who hears it than on the tongue of him who utters it; that when you come and sit in this house your profiting is suspended less upon what the preacher brings than upon what you bring; and that in the matter of listening to the Gospel, as well as with reference to charity, “it is more blessed to give than to receive.” Hence the admonition which Luke records as the practical lesson of this parable, “Take heed therefore how ye hear; for whosoever hath to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have.” He who comes to the truth with a sincere, teachable disposition shall receive instruction. “If any man will do (is willing to do) he shall know.” But the converse is equally certain. If a man is not willing to do, he shall not know; he hath not the heart to receive the truth in the love of it; and therefore he is given up to believe falsehoods, and the light which seemed to be in him becomes darkness.

Parables convey truth, not directly but circuitously, through the imagination; and in this parable of the

Sower, Jesus teaches us why, when the Gospel is preached, no impressions are made, or if made, why they are unproductive. I find among the Jewish doctors a classification of those who hear the words of wisdom somewhat similar to that before us. They, too, divide the listeners into four kinds, one of which I fear would take in some of this audience; I mean those who are compared to a seive, which lets through all the fine flour, and retains only the bran and dirt. In accounting for the failure of the truth, Jesus declares that it cannot be imputed to God. This supposition would be impious. No. God "would have all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth." Nor is there any weakness in the truth itself, which "is able to make us wise unto salvation through faith which is in Jesus Christ." The unfruitfulness of the truth is owing entirely to our own hearts, which Jesus compares to different sorts of soil.

On a former occasion, two of these kinds of ground passed under our review; the hard, beaten pavement on the highway; and the thin superficial layer of mold spread upon a rock.

We are now dealing with the field infested by thorns, which gives more promise than either of the other two. For, after all, rank, green weeds present a more encouraging spectacle than utter barrenness; and a deep, rich soil, overgrown with brambles, needing only careful husbandry and extirpation, is far more hopeful than a mere upper coating of earth with an impenetrable barrier underneath it so that the roots cannot supply nourishment and the hasty vegetation withers quickly away. And this is true as to the classes of hearers who are compared to these different kinds of ground. In the first class the word of God produces no effect. In the second there are only transient feelings. The hearers now before us not only receive the word, but retain it, and have the appearance of spiritual vitality; but, alas, all the promise they give comes to nothing, miscarries. They bring forth no fruit, at least, "no fruit to perfection." And the causes of this unproductiveness are given us by Him who well knows what is in the human heart. The reason of failure is in ourselves; in the lusts and passions which Jesus compares to thorns and weeds, the

natural growth of the field, which choke the fertility of the good seed, overshadow it, keep off the sun and deprive it of the room and nutriment it requires. To-night we are to examine one of these disastrous influences—"the deceitfulness of riches." Give me your attention; for either I am mistaken, or all of us need, some admonition as to this danger.

I. Now you can hardly reflect upon the image which the Saviour here employs as to covetousness, without being reminded of a passage in Paul's first epistle to Timothy which seems to have been suggested by this parable of the sower. Jesus compares the love of money to the noxious seeds and roots of cockles—a word, by the way, which is derived from the Anglo-Saxon *ceocan*, to choke. The apostle says that "the love of money is the root of all evil;"—a most vicious, pestiferous weed which, striking down into the soil, springs up into such a growth that every obscene bird lodges and roosts in its branches; and which is so prolific of all sorts of unworthy, debasing fruits, that the term *miser*, which means a wretch, has been relieved of all other service, and assigned exclusively to the duty of holding up this vice to universal and everlasting infamy.

Walking out into a fine, free, generous field, and seeing it overgrown with thistles and brambles, we naturally ask, Why is this? what enemy hath done this? how came these baneful weeds here? But nobody can solve the problem. The oldest proprietor declares it was always so in his day, and that his ancestors told him it had been always so in their day. Left to itself—nay without diligent care and cultivation, and the importation of foreign seed—the field had never produced a single grain of wheat or corn, but always thistles and briars. Nor is this true only of one field, but of all fields. So fearful a crisis is sin, that when man fell, inanimate nature felt the wound. God said, "Cursed be the ground; thorns and thistles shall it bring forth." And it is mournful to think that, when the Creator stooped to the earth, it had no diadem for him but a crown of thorns.

Well, now, in this behold a faithful emblem of the human heart. People are blind who do not see that its native propensities are all selfish—the love of power, of distinction, of sensual gratification, of money. But there is this difference, that, while each of the different weeds in the soil must have its own root, covetousness is a principle of such baleful fecundity that there is not a single depraved passion which may not spring from it.

Sometimes, indeed, this lust is a pure, unmixed “love of money”—an affection terminating on money itself. “Ephraim is *glued* (such is the original) to his idols.” The mind and heart of the wretched victim of avarice are glued to his idol. He worships Mammon. A vile, degrading passion—constant always to the dirt, to filthy lucre—reigns and rules in all his soul. His love, his life, his hope, his joy, his all is gold.

I believe, however, at least I would hope, that this ignoble, palpable idolatry is not very common. Generally, money is sought for some ulterior object. Sometimes for the gratification of a most contemptible vanity. “All this is mine. I am the possessor of so much. Wealth will procure me a reputation.” Incredible as it may seem, men have been known, men formed in God’s image, men before whom the Gospel unfolds all the stupendous realities of eternity—who have been absorbed by a desire to die rich. It will be fame; the only fame such base souls can hope for.

“That loudest laugh of hell, the pride of dying rich.”

Or, it may be ambition. We say that “knowledge is power;” but the proverb is far more true when applied to riches; for what miracles can they not work. “A feast is made for laughter, and wine maketh merry; but money answereth all things.” (Ecclesiastes x: 19.) Money is the cosmetic which gives beauty for deformity; the charm which converts the idiot into a genius; it is birth, blood, learning, refinement. Nay, let the most dissolute wretch have money, and it will be received as an equivalent for virtue. Not only will the multitude of his debaucheries be covered, but he will command respect and authority; and rank, beauty, purity will be

ready to contaminate themselves by an alliance with him.

The desire for wealth is often stimulated by that vivid, almost delirious strife for social precedence, which will always be waged in a country like ours, where the very equality to which all pretend causes the most restless impatience of equality, the incessant corrosions of rivalry. In other lands where the factitious distinctions of birth check all thought of equality, the multitudes yield to those who occupy a position entirely beyond their reach an homage which is a part of their patriotism, and acquiesce with pleasure in the visible, artificial magnificence they enjoy. But in this country of equality, everybody is eagerly striving to be superior to some other body; to mount higher than his ancestors; to efface his own obscurity and elevate his posterity. As there are no privileges or immunities established by law, every man and woman is seeking to secure some by wealth. And elegant mansions, splendid entertainments, costly furniture, chairs, tables, sofas, looking glasses, fine equipages, tawdry liveries—these are the contrivances to rival superiors, to surpass equals, to dazzle inferiors; these are the titles of nobility; these are the passports to high and fashionable society; these are the credentials, the heraldry of American aristocracy; before which learning, integrity, virtue, genius, piety hide their diminished heads.

In short, as wheat and corn grow with one upright stem, while briars and brambles run along the ground in all sorts of fantastic forms, so covetousness, always crawling on the dust, takes on sometimes the strangest, most capricious modifications. Rich men may be found laboring for a competency. They have more than enough now for all their wants; but they may want more at some future day; and by a competency they mean so much as shall make it certain they will always have a good deal more than they need. A still more deplorable type of this grovelling lust is, that dread of poverty which sometimes seizes upon men of affluence, causing them to deny themselves even the necessaries of life, to gripe the poor, to grind the faces of those who

work for them, to become such miserable preys to anxiety and apprehension, that the street beggar would pity them if he knew their wretchedness. And as this fear is vague and indistinct, imagination has full scope, "terrors make them afraid on every side," haunting them like a ghost, and tormenting them like a fiend.

And, now, as Jesus declares that this depraved lust chokes the word, we may apply that truth to Paul's remark, and say that it chokes all the fruit which the word of God would bring forth. In the vegetable world the most poisonous weed exhausts itself in bearing one evil fruit; but in moral vegetation, so exuberant is the depraved soil of the carnal heart, and such the inherent power of sin to propagate and multiply itself, that a solitary root—at least this one root—is prolific of every kind of mischief. It is "the root of all evil;" and chokes and strangles all good.

It chokes the soul; starving it here; damning it hereafter.

It chokes the ministry. Stinted in food, even lions become craven. Straited, embarrassed, painfully reminded by the meanness of those for whose souls he watches, of the dependence of himself and his family, noble must be the spirit of the pastor who is still bold and faithful as he ought to be. Too often the preacher is cowed, and unconsciously becomes a time-server, who never ventures to strike at the errors and sins of those who dole him out his scanty subsistence, but studies texts and topics which will flatter them. If evangelical truth is distasteful to them, he avoids such doctrines, and dwells on the morality of the Gospel—studiously shunning such terms as *justification, sanctification, election, imputation*. If he addresses Antinomians, he will trim to suit them. Not a word now about the duties of religion. Every discourse enlarges on *the covenants, the atonement, imputed righteousness, grace, election*. If the wealthy in his audience are sinfully conforming to the world, he never alludes to those Scriptures which denounce this iniquity, but expatiates on the harmlessness of innocent amusements, and the necessity of recommending religion by taking from it all gloom and narrowness. Above all

—though when conversing confidentially with a friend, he will be most pointed in censuring the sordid covetousness of some in the church of which he has the oversight, let him mount the pulpit when these members are before him, and he quails and is guilty of a perfidiousness most criminal and dishonorable. He exhibits his zeal in denouncing vehemently the vices of the poor—dishonesty, meanness, intemperance; but he is dumb as to that crime which Jesus and the apostles condemned so earnestly, so constantly, as one of the worst and most fatal abominations.

This pestilent vice chokes the discipline of a church. If a communicant be overtaken once in some fault; if surprised by the suddenness, or seduced by the insidiousness, or overcome by the strength of temptation, he is guilty of one act of intemperance, or theft, or licentiousness, instantly the rules of the church demand that he be dealt with as a criminal. His own good, we declare, and the honor of Christ's cause require this. But one may be a good Christian, nay, may be a faithful deacon, who is a bye-word for avarice, who is all his life steeped to the lips in a vice which God classes with the most heinous offences. "Be not deceived, neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor *covetous*," (see the company in which this professed disciple of Christ stands) "nor drunkards, nor revellers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you; but ye are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God." Here the apostle declares that, where the soul is regenerated, these sins are abhorred and renounced. Our churches are severely orthodox as to all of them except covetousness. They have unanimously resolved that this sin is quite consistent with holiness and salvation.

Covetousness chokes all the spirituality of a church, is a mildew under which its life withers. It so secularizes the members that, instead of deadness to the world, they outstrip the votaries of Mammon in their intense eagerness for accumulation, in that spirit of which God

declares that, "he who maketh haste to be rich shall not be innocent." Their treasures are upon the earth, and their hearts are here also. They who profess to set their affections on things above live under the curse pronounced against the serpent, "Upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life." They who have solemnly abjured the world, and dedicated themselves to heaven, become most melancholy exemplifications of this admonition—"They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition."

In short, this vile lust—spreading its envenomed ramifications through all the departments of evangelical enterprise—sending up its blighting shoots in all the fields of Christian benevolence—chokes every noble undertaking. The cause of missions, of the Bible, of the Sabbath school, of every blessed charity, feels the overshadowing, stifling, suffocating presence and power of this baleful weed, whose roots are imbedded in the deepest, rankest depravities of our nature.

Up to this point I have been speaking of covetousness, and Luke mentions the love of riches as the source of all evil. But in our text Matthew records a phrase which gives additional significancy to this part of the parable. He says, "the deceitfulness of riches chokes the word."

This interpretation is very full of meaning. It teaches us that Jesus is not alluding at all to the fatal curse of riches which have been obtained by dishonest means.—Such wealth can deceive nobody; not others, for at the tribunal of public opinion the man who has thus amassed a fortune is doomed to perpetual infamy; nor the man himself, for conscience explores all his secret windings and shiftings, his duplicity and perfidy, and forces him to feel his baseness and villany. The Saviour refers to wealth obtained or pursued honestly, and to the unsearchable artifices by which a man is enslaved and debased through its influence, without being at all sensible of his bondage and degradation.

We have a striking illustration of this "deceitfulness of riches" in the young man who came to Jesus, and on

his knees, asked, "What shall I do, that I may inherit eternal life?" So amiable was his character, that "Jesus, beholding him, loved him." So unconscious was he of the lust which had dominion in his heart and held him bound hand and foot, that he asserted his innocence from his youth up, and confidently demanded what it was he lacked? But no sooner did the Searcher of hearts touch this hidden vice than "he went away sorrowful." Underneath an exterior so charming, and while he thought himself perfect before God, there was a soul enthralled by this grovelling passion. It was this case which caused Jesus to utter that startling exclamation, "How hardly shall they who have riches enter into the kingdom of God."

Let me illustrate the "deceitfulness of riches" in another way, and by examining the apostle's declaration, that "Covetousness is idolatry." Idolatry is the adoration of a false God. Suppose, now, that one of our fellow citizens should erect a public temple, and build an altar to Mammon, and should enter and bow the knee there once a day. The very supposition shocks us, nor would any Christian community tolerate such an outrage. After all, however, the chief element in idolatry, as in religion, is the oblation of the heart. The exterior homage rendered by this man, like much of that offered to God, might be a mere formality. But in the world, nay, in the church, there are thousands whose hearts are temples in which gold and silver are enshrined; who love these divinities, and worship them with all their mind and soul and strength. Yet these devout idolators never dream of their condition in the sight of God, and many of them profess to be Christians. The voluptuary and debauchee they abhor; but, after all, their reigning passion is just as impious, and far more incurable. He who makes sensual pleasure his deity, offers to his idol only the worship of his senses—a worship which cools when his appetite is jaded. But in making money his god, a man renders up the homage of his mind; and it is an homage which becomes more inveterate, more intense, more adoring as his possessions increase. Yet is he wholly unsuspecting of the fact. Nothing could convince him

that Baal or Moloch was not more really the god of a pagan, than Mammon is the god of his affections.

Indeed, so strangely cozened, duped, cheated are we by the fascinations of wealth, that our vocabulary confesses its illusions, and is tributary to its usurpations.— In all our noble Anglo-Saxon language, there is scarcely a nobler word than *worth*; yet this term has now almost exclusively a pecuniary meaning. So that if you ask what a man is *worth*, nobody ever thinks of telling you what he *is*, but what he *has*. The answer will never refer to his merits, his virtues, but always to his possessions. He is worth——so much money.

But look a little closer at this beguiling power of wealth, and observe how “after the working of Satan with all deceivableness of unrighteousness” it weaves a spell over those who surrender themselves to its unhalloved dominion.

An impious independence of God and an insane confidence in riches is one very common type of this moral sorcery. “If I have made gold my hope, or have said to fine gold, Thou art my confidence; if I rejoiced because my wealth was great, and because mine hand had gotten much, if I beheld the sun when it shined or the moon walking in brightness, and my heart hath been secretly enticed, or my mouth hath kissed my hand; this also were an iniquity to be punished by the judge; *for I should have denied the God that is above.*” In this passage we have the remarkable announcement, that those who make gold their hope or trust, betray the same atheistical perversity as those who worship the sun or the moon. Where, however, can we look without seeing this derangement among the multitudes who pursue or possess wealth? With minds framed to know God, with consciences which ought habitually to recognize him, and hearts which should render him supreme affection, they pass their lives in a practical renunciation of him in all their thoughts, affections, projects and desires. Yet they are so blinded and bewitched, that they recoil from atheism as from the worst form of wickedness and blasphemy.

Another noticeable evidence of this jugglery practised by the magician who presides over riches, is found in the specious titles under which the love of money will insinuate itself into men's hearts, even while they pretend to despise it. No matter how it be arraigned, convicted, banished in its proper name, like a thief escaped from the penitentiary, or a felon come back from Botany Bay in some honest man's apparel, it makes its appearance under a new name, in a stolen wardrobe, and thus eludes detection, nay, passes for a virtue.

Sometimes it is *Industry*. Does not God himself say, be "not slothful in business"? And under this pretext all the powers of the soul are desecrated to the gratification of this fatal passion. Sometimes it is *Obeying the voice of Providence*. I find myself prospering in my business, and it would be ungrateful if I did not improve the flood in my affairs. Thus a heart bent on its lusts misinterprets all the dealings of God. A third guise is *Economy*. Waste and extravagance have ruined thousands; it is my duty to use that frugality which prudence dictates; and with such a creed a man devotes his days and nights to the meanest penuriousness. But of all the counterfeits under which this vice masks and parades itself, the most universal and plausible is *Parental Duty*. No one blames a father for seeking to make some provision by which his family may be spared the humiliations and miseries of dependence; but this is not the aim of those to whom I now refer. Not a competency, but wealth they are toiling to bequeath; and this great solicitude is really nothing but the insatiable cravings of covetousness. It is love for money, not love for their children. If these children should themselves become possessed of vast fortunes, nay, if they should die, this absorbing eagerness would know no abatement. That these parents may really mistake their avarice for parental affection, I do not doubt; but it is only because they are the dupes of a passion which thus rivets upon them a tyranny most insidious and inexorable.

And this suggests the only other evidence of the ensnaring potency of a covetous spirit which I can now

indicate. I refer to the supremacy which it gradually usurps, and under which its victim is at last preyed upon by a hopeless infatuation. This is the danger which, in the parable of the rich fool, Jesus portrays with such a searching insight into the very depths of our nature, and with such graphic power. Neither there, nor anywhere did he condemn the possession of wealth; for wealth sanctified is one of the means by which some Christians are more fruitful in good works than others, as we shall see when we come to the class of hearers who are compared to the "good ground." Abraham, who by his answer so stung Dives in hell, probably possessed in his lifetime, more wealth than he; but his riches were not his "good things." As I have elsewhere remarked, the Saviour attributes the ruin of the rich man to the moral disease which concentrated all his thoughts upon a single object—the monomania which caused him to forget his dignity and his destiny, which cashiering every sentiment of death, eternity, God—hurried him with restless avidity after illusions that mocked him in life, and plunged him into an abyss of misery after death. And here, before me in this audience, are more than one who might sit as the original to that portrait.

I need not dwell longer upon the deceitfulness with which riches ensnare the souls of those who possess or pursue them. Nor if you have listened to me, can you help perceiving that the "unrighteous mammon" must choke the Gospel, rendering it abortive, though at first its reception seemed to be with faith and gave the most auspicious promise; so that, instead of having its fruit unto holiness now, and the end everlasting life, the soul is cursed with sterility and is lost forever.

"The deceitfulness of riches" leaves a man no leisure for eternal things. The cares, urgencies, perplexities of business press upon him morning, noon, and night. His very dreams are of his gains, losses, projects, investments. Even in the closet, in the sanctuary, at the communion he is haunted by the omnipresent predominance of these objects. And all his attention, all the energies of his body are exhausted upon the materialism around him, just as if there were no God, no hereafter,

as if the world with its visible elements were all in all to him.

“The deceitfulness of riches” leaves a man no thoughts for spiritual things. Like the field impregnated with the seeds of briars and brambles, his mind is entirely preoccupied. A supreme devotion to the world reigns within; and so impossible is it to bring him off from his consuming desires, restless anxieties, brooding apprehensions, and to fix his thoughts upon religion, that Jesus says, “It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.”

Lastly, and worst of all, “the deceitfulness of riches” leaves a man no heart for religion. The ground has room and nourishment enough either for the wheat or the thorns, but not enough for both; and the thorns, being indigenous, grow with a rank luxuriance and stifle the wheat. So it is with our hearts. They have affections for earth or heaven; but not enough to love both supremely. The infatuation of the covetous Christian (if I may unite terms so diametrically opposed to each other) is that he supposes he can give his heart to Christ and to Mammon; but all observation and experience repeat the declaration of the Saviour, who warns us that such an attempt will be fatal to the soul. Very soon wealth will stand between him and heaven. On the Sabbath, and in church his feelings may be occasionally drawn toward God; but the habitual, spontaneous bent of his affections, which alone furnishes any test of character, turns instinctively to his possessions. Looking up to the starry heavens, the Psalmist loses sight of that display of physical glory, as he contemplates the amiable Being so dear to him, and he exclaims, “How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God.” Then retiring to his couch, his meditations still dwell sweetly upon the adorable object who is the centre, and portion, and resting-place of his heart; and his language is, “My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips, when I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches.” It is impossi-

ble to conceive any contrast more entire and absolute, than that which exists between a heart thus glowing with love to God, and a heart in which the love of money has cashiered all sense of God—his love, his presence, his glory; and which is no sooner relieved from the mockery of a tedious round of religious formalism, than it reverts to the sanctuaries where its wealth is invested, with an intenseness of homage surpassing that of the most devout Israelite who ever, from a foreign land, turned his longing eyes toward Jerusalem.

My beloved hearers, I beseech you, by the love of God, I conjure you to quell the deceitful power of this groveling passion. The Philistines are upon us, the enemies of our souls are pressing in from every side; and shall we be overtaken in the lap of the enchantress? However bewitched hitherto, let us—at least those of us who are Christ's—break away from the spell of the sorcerer.

The dervise in the Eastern legend readily abandoned to his companions the camels laden with gold and silver, when he had found the casket containing the magical ointment, one drop of which, if applied to his eyes, showed him where all the treasures of the earth were concealed. Let us to whom faith reveals the unsearchable riches of Christ, all the glories of heaven, let us spurn as comparatively contemptible, the wealth for which the men of the world are losing their souls.

As I have already intimated, the class of hearers here admonished by Jesus, finds a large representation in our churches. The depravities of the world develop themselves in various gratifications which common consistency prohibits to those who call themselves the disciples of the Saviour; but avarice is a baptized, orthodox vice; and the selfish tendencies of professed Christians generally concentrate in this indulgence. Like Aaron's rod, this passion swallows up all the other passions.

In this, and in other parables, and by the most expressive images and solemn warnings, God declares that "no covetous man hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God." At best, if a Christian allows this vice to gain possession of his heart, he can be rescued only by the sharp discipline of affliction. "Every plant

which my heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up." If we are "the planting of the Lord," we must be fruitful; and if the graces of the Spirit are choked by moral weeds, there must come the pruning and weeding; and for this the sharp steel must cut through, and cut up until all quivers and bleeds under its edge. Of this truth what a fearful exemplification we find in the history of Lot. Though "a righteous man," yet the love of unrighteous mammon insinuated itself into his heart. What follows? God allows marauders to take him prisoner, and carry away all his fortune. Thus chastened, he is still uncorrected; and fire and brimstone from heaven lay his possessions in ashes, driving him from his blazing home, a pauper, an exile and an outcast. Nor did the judgments of God cease there. The deceitfulness of riches had so corrupted the heart of his wife, that she looked back with longing eyes to the splendor she had left behind, and was stricken at his very side into a monument of divine vengeance. And while his married daughters perish in the flames, the two children who escape survive only to cover his gray hairs with shame and infamy, by the voluptuousness which wealth and luxury had nourished in them. What a melancholy history! And it is not without its counterpart at this day. For covetousness God has still to smite and afflict his children so that they are saved as by fire; and often they go down to the grave, bemoaning, in the profligacy of their sons, and the utter worldliness of their daughters, the curse of a lust which has settled like a plague spot upon their families.

My God, is not this a portrait of my character and conduct? Is not this love of money my secretly besetting sin? Is my conversation without covetousness, so that I am satisfied with such things as I have? Is my diligence in business accompanied and pervaded by fervency in thy service? Am I constantly mindful of thy charge, that I trust not in uncertain riches for my happiness, that I do good, and be rich in good works, that I be ready to distribute, willing to communicate—thus laying up in store for myself a good foundation, that I

may lay hold on eternal life? Do I habitually regard myself as thy steward, and am I applying the deposits in my hands as under thine eye? Am I living hourly in view of that day when thou wilt say to me, Give an account of thy stewardship? Is my treasure in heaven? And do I know this by the consciousness that my heart is there?

O ye that hear me this night, whoever ye may be, examine yourselves by such questions as these honestly put to your consciences. Rest assured by this course you will best consult your highest interests. By stripping him of all his wealth the enemy of God vainly hoped to subvert the piety of Job.

“But Satan now is wiser than before,
And tempts by making rich, not making poor.”

Over and over God warns us of the unsearchably seductive power of riches to those who possess or pursue them. Hear his warnings before it is too late. Recollect that the love of money is one of the most noxious, prolific growths which choke the Gospel; and that the earth “which beareth thorns and briars is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned.”

But your heavenly Father not only seeks to guard you against the fatal love of earthly possessions; he calls you to secure riches in heaven. Hear and obey his invitation. “Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.”

This wealth, purchased for you at such an amazing cost, is now offered to you. It will satisfy all the boundless, immortal aspirations of your soul, enriching you with spiritual pleasures now, raising you hereafter to a sceptre, a crown, a throne. Come, then to Jesus; and come now. Come just as you are, “wretched and miserable and poor and naked,” and receive from him “gold tried in the fire that you may be rich”—that you may be “rich toward God,”—rich for eternity, rich in “an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you.”

Sermon Fourteenth.

MORTIFICATION OF SIN.

“FOR if ye live after the flesh ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.”—ROM. viii: 13.

MY BRETHREN, we speak very loosely when we say that liberty is the glory of man. In a restricted, political sense this is true; but in a large interpretation it is not liberty, it is healthful restraint which is our noblest dignity and happiness. Or rather, there is no true freedom except in order, in subordination to wise government. Hence James styles the commandments of God, “the royal law of liberty;” the highest archangel knowing and desiring no other liberty but that of perfect obedience to the will of God.

Our Apostle has just declared that “the carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be, so that they who are in the flesh cannot please God.” The proof, the essence of man’s depravity is, that his heart is an outlaw,—that he has revolted against God’s moral sovereignty, and set up his own appetites and passions which have usurped full control over him. Hence disorder, sin, misery, ruin, death. To surrender ourselves to the supremacy of these corrupt propensities, is to kill all spiritual vitality out of us.—They must be unremittingly opposed and subdued. It is only by such an arduous and victorious conflict that the peace, strength, life of the soul can be secured.—“For if ye live after the flesh ye shall die, but if ye thro’ the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.”

I. In unfolding this passage, I desire first to call your attention to the great indispensable life-duty of every Christian,—the mortification of sin in himself. I say of every Christian; for to expect an unrenewed man to mortify sin is simply preposterous,—that is to say, it is putting something before which must follow after; and of this absurdity they are guilty who suppose that real holiness can precede conversion and faith in Christ.

What, I hear you say, is holiness, then, not the duty of all? Because his heart is not changed, is a man to give loose to his lusts and passions? I will answer this question by another. When a disease is speeding its fatal poison through the system, is it our first duty to apply ourselves to one of its symptoms and seek to remove that? If a fire were consuming your dwelling, would you set yourself to quench the sparks which were falling around you? A morass is spreading pestilence through a district; shall the inhabitants seek to disinfect the air?—Certainly the symptoms are to be abated, the sparks are to cease, the atmosphere must be purified; but it must be by healing the malady, extinguishing the fire, draining the morass. And just so as to impenitent men. It is their duty to be holy, to resist their evil passions, to mortify sin; but this is not their immediate duty. Their first business is conversion. Their urgent, pressing work is to come to Jesus and receive life from him. “Then said they unto him, What shall we do that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.” I would not inculcate an unscriptural orthodoxy. I remember that the prayers and alms of Cornelius went up for a memorial before God, and this brought him to the knowledge of Jesus. Unconverted men should pray and cultivate all their natural feelings of benevolence; but this is not holiness.

“If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body;”—whom is the apostle addressing? Those to whom it is declared that “there is no condemnation,” because “they are in Christ Jesus;” (ver. 1,) so elsewhere: “If ye then be risen with Christ,” “mortify your members which are upon the earth.” To build a house by com-

mencing at the top and working down to the foundation would not be a more hopeless task than to mortify a single sin before we have come to Christ by faith in his atonement, and have been made partakers of his life by union with him as a risen, living Redeemer.

It is, too, only "by the Spirit" that we can "mortify the deeds of the body." Those who hope to correct the moral disorders of our nature by human agency know nothing of mankind, nothing of themselves. And even in the use of means which God has appointed, without a special divine administration nothing ever is or can be accomplished for the transformation of the heart. As soon may we see without eyes or walk without feet, as subdue our corruptions without the co-operation of the Holy Spirit; but while a man is unconverted he is "always resisting the Holy Ghost." Jesus declares that the most flagrant insult to the Spirit is our unbelief in him. "He shall glorify me." "He shall convince the world of sin because they believe not on me." To reject the Saviour, therefore, is to commit the grossest outrage against this divine Agent; and of this crime every unconverted man is habitually, wilfully and most defiantly guilty.

You see, then, with what accuracy I applied the term "preposterous" to all systems which suppose that mortification can precede that faith in Jesus which the Gospel always prescribes as the first exigent duty of every man when awakened to a sense of sin. I now go farther and affirm that in these abortive efforts there is unspeakable danger.

"Make the tree good and his fruit will be good;" and as such a tree is pruned and cultivated, its harvest will be more abundant. But it is folly to hope that an "evil tree" has been improved because you have knocked off its sour fruit or rotten foliage; they will certainly reappear. And just so, afflictions, terrors of conscience, convictions, alarms or other motives may curb the paroxysms of a besetting sin; but if the heart be not renewed, its corruptions will after a while, break out into a violence only exasperated by restraint. Dark and desperate as were David's crimes, the fearful thing in them which filled him with terror was, that they betrayed the pollu-

tion within. Hence his imploring cry, "Create in me a clean heart, O God." But by directing a soul under conviction to the work of mortifying a lust, you conceal from it the fatal source of the evil, you divert it from the instant duty of crying to God and casting itself upon the Redeemer for entire renovation. The Gospel is an alterative; it not only makes a man better than he was, it makes him other than he was; and less than this cannot cure the malady. "When Ephraim saw his sickness and Judah saw his wound, then went Ephraim to the Assyrian and sent for king Jareb, yet could he not heal you, nor cure you of your wound."

Where there has been no real change, prayers, resolutions, vows, partial reformations, religious observances often act as an opiate to the mind; the consciousness of sincere desires and efforts produces an idea that our condition is greatly improved. In the absence of any true peace in believing, a most self-complacent tranquillity insinuates itself into the soul, and one of two deplorable results follows. When in spite of these feelings and professions sin again triumphs—mocking to scorn the checks which for a while had quelled it—the man is utterly discouraged, he is tempted to regard all resistance as hopeless in his case, and to become reckless through despair. All these human restraints seem now only to give additional power to his corruptions. The embankments thrown up to keep the water from the fields, now, that they have been overflowed, keep the water in. "Sin taking occasion by the commandment, works in him all manner of concupiscence." The very law imposed upon his appetites now inflames them into a more intense and heated fermentation; and his history realizes the parable of the demoniac, into whose heart a temporary exorcism only caused the evil spirit to return with more malignant forces, and whose latter end was worse than the first.—Or, if he be not thus tempted to say, "There is no hope," a more fatal consequence follows. These spurious affections and reformations inspire a false hope. Gradually he relapses into his evil ways, and manages to reconcile his religion with his sins. The exterior proprieties of piety he still observes, and at times he is moved and

melted into frames of the tenderest devotion ; but this deceitful sentimentalism serves only to deliver him up more irrevocably to destruction. For it is a fearful truth that without a principle of grace, without that firm, resolute purpose which the Holy Spirit only can nourish, warm and seemingly religious emotions have a very close affinity with effeminacy of character, with voluptuousness, with impurity itself. There is a delicious softness and mystery in the bosom, and tears and prayers are a luxury ; but all this is full of danger ; never is the heart more enfeebled and disarmed, never is the mind more blinded, the imagination more under the fascination of the passions. The cross is the emblem of the religion of Jesus,—an emblem, not of exquisite sensibilities soothed and charmed by romantic devotions, but of that stern fidelity which alone can secure the approbation of God and of our own consciences.

Other foundation for sanctification can no man lay than that is laid, which is Christ Jesus. Hence in seeking the holiness of their hearers ministers are not to inveigh against certain vices, but to preach Christ crucified, that so men may be drawn to the source of spiritual life and spiritual strength. The mortification of sin is the work of a Christian, of a live man. I do not under-estimate “the form of godliness;” it is the outer bark ; and as the rind is essential to the life of a tree, so we may rest assured there is no vital piety in the heart when the outward profession is refused. But there may be bark on a dead tree ; and as all the bark in the world cannot make a rotten trunk flourish, so no sincerity and scrupulousness of outward devotion can ever produce a single “fruit unto holiness.”

Mortification can be the work only of a truly converted soul. I now remark that it is the indispensable work of every converted soul ; for with whatever confidence you may say of any child of Adam, That man is a Christian ; with equal confidence you can add, That Christian is a man. Who amongst us is so presumptuous as to measure his attainments with those of the apostle Paul ? Yet he declares that he could only be saved by the severe, successful discipline of his corrupt nature. “I keep under

my body and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." Yes, pressing hourly upon the holiest, there is still

"The most difficult of tasks, to keep
Heights which the soul is competent to gain."

Clinging hourly to the holiest there is still a "body of death" from which we are only delivered by the death of the body. Cultivate the heart for years, then cease your toil and care, what follows? So interwoven with the soul are the noxious roots—so scattered over it the tare seeds, that what seemed once the garden of the Lord, resembles the field of the slothful all grown over with thorns, and the face thereof covered with nettles. Upon the earth God has had but one son who could declare of temptation that it found nothing in him. In us, that is in our flesh, there abide carnal thoughts and dispositions which demand the hourly repetition of that warning, "Having these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord."

Nor do these sinful propensities only remain in us; they are treacherous enemies ever seeking, by unsearchable artifices, to throw off all control, and to win some conquest. "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit." "I see a law in my members warring against the law of my mind." Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul."

II. You see, then, that the mortification of sin is the work only of a Christian, and that it is the indispensable work of every Christian. I pass, now, to the motives by which that duty is enforced in our text; for the apostle declares, that it is nothing less than a matter of life and death to the soul. "If ye live after the flesh ye shall die, but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body ye shall live."

Death; death *now* to our spiritual life. Seductive and delicious as may be the pleasures of sin, let us re-

member they are fatal to all that is spiritual within us. Their influence is subtle and poisonous like that of the Southern malaria, which amidst the perfume of flowers, and wafted by cool, refreshing zephyrs after the heat of the day, breathes death into the system.

Unmortified sinful propensities defeat the very purpose for which the new life is given us. Every evangelical grace is a spiritual outfit to arm and invigorate us for the conquest of our corrupt inclinations. "The Spirit lusteth against the flesh"—wages a violent conflict with our depraved passions. In yielding to sin we resist this gracious ally, and frustrate the very design of Him who, in conversion, called us with a holy calling.

Unmortified thoughts and feelings assail the principle of spiritual life and blight its strength; they are suicidal in their work. The word *passion* means suffering; and in every sinful indulgence the soul suffers, the power of corruption is increased, disease spreads through the senses, the mind, the conscience, the heart, the memory, the imagination; and, of course, as the malady is diffused, spiritual health decays, all the graces wither and are "ready to die." To be saved the light that is in us must be obeyed, holy dispositions must be nourished, and our depraved inclinations must be subdued; but each unheeded remonstrance of conscience renders other remonstrances more feeble, until "the light that is in us becomes darkness;" each resistance of a holy aspiration makes other resistances less painful; each successful temptation secures an easier triumph for other temptations.

Unmortified sin destroys all life in our duties. When conscious that we are daily denying ourselves, curbing all the motions of sin in our members, repelling the first approaches of temptation, and living lives of faith and holiness, with what filial assurance do we cry, Abba Father, and pour out all our souls in prayer. If our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God, and whatsoever we ask we receive of him because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight." Then, too, with what energy, elasticity, delight do we engage in the service of the

Redeemer; feeling that in life, in death, through eternity we can know no nobler honor, can taste no diviner pleasure than to be the servants of a Being so loved and adored. "I will walk at liberty, for I seek thy precepts, I will delight myself in thy commandments which I have loved." A body hast thou prepared me, I delight to do thy will, O God;—these hands welcome thy tasks, these feet rejoice in thy paths. But no sooner does conscience accuse us of known sins, than we feel that prayer is a mockery; "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." And all that joy of the Lord which is our strength, all the exhilaration of the conflict, all hope of success begins at once to fail and to perish.

I will only add that by ceasing to mortify our sins, we forfeit the peace of God which is to "keep our hearts and minds." And losing this peace, we have no evidence that we are the children of God; instead of sweet communion with him, there is trouble and unhappiness which unfit us for the Christian life. The apostle could exclaim, "I live," only when he could say, "I am crucified with Christ." We do not live unless conscious of this crucifixion. Without this daily self-immolation Jesus withdraws from us, "he hides his face and we are troubled." Instead of spiritual life and prosperity, there is war in our souls; and as in all intestine wars, so in this, there must be desolation and death, until the revolt ceases and the rightful sovereignty be re-established.

It is certain, then, that, unless sin be every day dying in us, the opposite principle—the new life will be every day languishing and dying. This, however, does not exhaust the solemn truth in our text. "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die;"—die eternally. I will not stop to notice objections and refinements drawn from the doctrine of election or perseverance; these metaphysical abstractions can do no man nor woman any good here. I tell you from God that "if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die."

It is directly after enumerating the "works of the flesh," that the apostle utters the solemn warning, "Of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in times

past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." And if in any doctrine you can find consolation while living in sin, you are turning the grace of God into licentiousness; nor is there a more evident "token of perdition" than a heart thus abandoned to its corruptions, and a mind thus given up "to strong delusion that it might believe a lie."

My beloved friends, whatever may be your theological creed, never forget these truths; that if you live after the flesh you will die; that between a life of unmortified sin and the second death, there is the indissoluble connection of cause and effect; that without holiness no man shall see the Lord; that into the heavenly city "there shall, in no wise, enter anything that defileth;" that a man who passes into eternity with all his corruptions upon him will have to take up that fearful wail, "Which way I fly is hell, myself am hell." Can there be, then, any condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus? Never, assuredly. But who are in Christ Jesus? They "who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Can a child of God perish? Certainly not. But who is a child of God? "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." If we love Jesus is it not because he first loved us, and is not his "an everlasting love?" All this is most incontestable. But who is it that loves Jesus? "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me." If I live after the flesh I do not love Christ, I insult and crucify him afresh, I dishonor his truth, and cause "his holy name to be blasphemed."

Death, then, death present and eternal must be the consequence of a life of sinful indulgence. "The wages of sin are death." Look now at the other motive urged in the text;—the life we secure by resisting the evil propensities of our nature. "If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live."

I do not deem it necessary to explain at any length what is meant by mortification. I only say this, that it is upon the necks of our lusts we must rise to our true life. "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." To mortify our corrup-

tions is to crucify them,—to reduce them by protracted, painful exhaustion. It is not to extirpate sin, so that the tempter can have nothing in us; still less is it a mere outward reformation; but it is the daily conquest of the inward vital power of sin, by the radical principle of grace in the heart. This deadening of the body of sin is the mortification of the lusts of the flesh. And this is life.

Life now; for it is a law of our nature that every refusal to do wrong weakens the desire which prompted the wrong. In the philosophy of our being we must reap what we sow; there is a self-propagating power in good as well as in evil. We cannot achieve a virtuous victory without gaining courage and strength for fresh victories. If when solicited by the passions, we steadfastly resist, our corrupt dispositions, by frequent experience of the fruitlessness of the attempts, will gradually languish, and the soul will rejoice in recruited spiritual vigor. “Resist the Devil,”—do not parley with him,—“and he will flee from you.” “He that loseth his life for my sake shall find it;” that is, he who mortifies the earthly sensual life, shall find the real heavenly life. “If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall have much fruit;” and “because I live, ye shall live also.” The spiritually minded Christian has a proof of the Saviour’s resurrection which others cannot understand. He is “risen with Christ;” risen from the death of sin; risen to newness of life, to new power over his corruptions. He can say, “I *know* that my Redeemer liveth,” because he shares in the resurrection life of him who “was delivered for our sins, and rose again for our justification.” He is not only “quickened together with Christ,” but is “raised up together and made to sit in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” It is comparatively little to say of such a man, that he looks up from earth to heaven; the fact being that he looks down habitually from heaven to earth.

And such a life is, of course, the earnest and commencement of eternal life. “If ye by the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live;” live forever. “He that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit

reap life everlasting." After death this sentence goes forth irrevocably, "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still." A life in which we mortify sin is the necessary preparation for heaven; it is the earnest of heaven; it is heaven itself;—heaven begun in the soul which, emancipated from the gross passions that had debased it, finds every sin trampled under foot to be a round of the celestial ladder, and feels that holiness is the fiery chariot in which it mounts victoriously up to God.

III. There is time for me to urge but one more truth contained in the text. I refer to the assistance by which alone the mortification of sin can be achieved. "If ye by the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." And unless we are wholly blinded, this topic must be to us not only a subject of profound interest, but a source of unspeakable consolation.

For we all know one thing; we know that we have sinned; and that sin is in us a principle of baneful power and unsearchable deceitfulness. "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us." This, however, is a deception which none of you can practise on yourselves. "No sin!" but what does conscience say to this? "No sin!" but what does the state of the world say to this? how can we account for the disorders all around us? "No sin!" What does the Bible say to this?—what the law?—the Gospel?—all the inspired doctrines, promises, warnings, entreaties? above all, the amazing sacrifice of Calvary?

We have sinned, and if the sense of our sins only wears out of the memory, instead of being washed out of the conscience, they will one day reappear, as if emerging from their concealments, and overwhelm us with shame and confusion. It is a truth as certain as it is terrible, that the mind can forget nothing. Drowning men have declared, that in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, all their past history has flashed before them. And at the judgment, consciousness will be the "open

book" in which each man shall be compelled to read the record of every action, word, thought, of his whole life. We may quiet ourselves by stifling our convictions; so much the worse for our inward corruptions "That which thou sowest is not quickened except it die." While we remember and lament our sins, they remain alone; it is when they are hidden from our thoughts that they strike their roots deep into our hearts, and send up a prolific harvest to be reaped in eternity. We think that the fatal register has been effaced, but it resembles those writings in sympathetic ink, which no sooner feel the fire than they come out in perfect accuracy and distinctness.

"We have all sinned;" and how can we be delivered from sin?—from its guilt and its power? Compared with this question, all the researches of science and genius sink into absolute insignificance; and the Gospel alone answers the question. The Gospel is good news, glad tidings of great joy, because it reveals that blood through which "we have redemption even the forgiveness of our sins," and promises that grace by which we can triumph over all our criminal desires. I know, and it is important for us always to remember, that in the text, as in all the Bible, the Holy Spirit is vouchsafed only as an aid, and that we ourselves are to mortify our unworthy passions. "If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." But this supernatural succor is not less indispensable for all that. Because this mysterious agency is invisible and not subject to our control, we are apt to lose sight of our entire dependence upon it. Let us, however, never forget that the atonement was not more necessary for our justification, than is the Holy Spirit for our sanctification. We daily need his heavenly radiance that we may be saved from delusions, may see things in their true lights; and it is the Spirit alone who "helps our infirmities," whether in prayer, or in withstanding and subduing the power of temptation. "He that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption." In the husbandry of evil, everything,—soil, seed, sowing, reaping—is of the flesh. "He that soweth to the Spirit,

shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." In the work of holiness all is spiritual. There is a superinduced spiritual soil, and the seed is spiritual, and vainly would man sow, without the constant interposition of God in the whole process of vegetation, from the first germ to the final harvest of glory.

The Spirit alone "convinces us of sin," opens the eyes of our understanding to see its secret power and infinite malignity. Unconverted men do not perceive, at least they do not condemn their bosom sins; but it is against these that a Christian chiefly prays and strives. For the Spirit teaches him that these hidden corruptions are the worms at the root and in the bud of every evangelical grace; that in himself is the treasure-house out of which "a good man bringeth forth good things, and an evil man bringeth forth evil things;" that out of the heart are the issues of life; and that if the plague be nourished there, it only requires the presence of temptation to break out in "evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies," every abominable crime.

And there is another class of sins the "exceeding sinfulness" of which we never feel until the Spirit sets them in a clear light, and causes us to see them in their true colors. I refer to the lusts of the mind,—passions not gross and sensual, but spiritual;—pride, prejudice, covetousness, envy, hatred, malice, vindictiveness. It is against these sins that the Psalmist cries to God in his imploring prayer not only for "a clean heart," but for "a *right spirit*;" and to these the apostle alludes when, interceding for the Thessalonians, he specifies the sanctification of the intellect as the first great element of holiness. "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly, and I pray God your whole *spirit*, soul, and body may be presented blameless unto the coming of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." No propensities of our depraved nature fortify the heart more hopelessly against the principles of the Gospel than these spiritual vices; they are "the carnal mind" which "is enmity against God," and as to which we must be "renewed in the spirit of our minds." But all this no man ever sees until the

Holy Spirit dispels the darkness of his soul. Judging from their conduct, it is appalling to observe how, as to this class of sins, most professed Christians are entirely blinded by the God of this world.

The Spirit alone engages us in the work of real mortification. I say, real mortification, because many evil passions may be restrained by the force of natural resolution. In their pursuit after wealth, honor, even sensual gratification, what a mastery do men obtain over some of the most urgent solicitations of the flesh; but as it would be absurd to suppose that the body could enjoy health or even survive, if the vital principle were only in one arm or one foot, as true life in any member must be a portion of the life circulating through the whole system,—so it avails nothing that we set ourselves to correct one or two evil propensities, unless we seek to be “sanctified wholly.” We do not mortify any sin, unless we mortify all sin. If we are perfecting holiness in the fear of God, if we are truly crucifying the flesh with its lusts and affections, we will oppose, not some, but all of our sinful inclinations. And this will only be when we are under the control of the Spirit of holiness.

The Spirit not only enlists us in the work, but constantly stirs up “our pure minds,” and recruits those graces which must be kept in active exercise, if our corrupt nature is to be subdued. Sin dies hard; especially an easily besetting sin, an old inveterate habit of sin; hence it must be “crucified,”—must expire, not by one act of violence, but by a slow, protracted, daily dying. For this, however, we need “the renewing of the Holy Ghost;” our inward man must be “renewed day by day;” our souls must be rallied and roused to ceaseless vigilance, prayer and activity. Moreover our conquests over our sins must be achieved, not by direct resistance, but by counteracting influences; just as fire is extinguished, not by beating it, but by the application of an opposing element. We must “overcome evil with good.” If a man be under the power of any lust or passion, let him not hope to do anything by struggling with it. By dwelling on his sin, brooding over his conscious guilt

and degradation, praying, resolving against his depraved appetites, he keeps ever before his imagination an object which irritates his desires and binds its unhappy victim more helplessly even while it scourges him. If we would "cease to do evil," we must "learn to do well;" we must turn to other thoughts and affections which will divert and elevate our feelings. "Break off your sins by righteousness." It is "through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Christ," that we escape "the pollutions of the world." It is when "beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord," that we are "changed into the image of the Lord." Indeed the apostle intimates, that forbidden passions have power over us, because we do not engage our hearts with views of God—his majesty, purity, love. "Awake to righteousness and sin not, for some *have not the knowledge of God.*" But it is only by the Spirit's interposition that we can be brought and kept under these hallowing influences. "This I say, then, walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh."

In a word, from first to last, our victory over sin must be through the power of the cross of Christ; by this only the world is crucified unto us, and we are crucified to the world. "They overcame by the blood of the Lamb;" but it is the office of the Spirit to take of the things of Christ and shew them unto us. All Gospel gifts and graces are received from Jesus and must be communicated by the Spirit. It was when one of the seraphim laid upon the prophet's mouth a live coal taken from off the altar, that he heard a voice saying, "Thy iniquity is taken away, and thy sin is purged;" and it is when the Spirit causes our hearts to burn within us, by touching them with glowing truths brought from the altar on Calvary, that we experience the power of a crucified Saviour to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. "God who knoweth the heart, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Spirit even as he did unto us, and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith." Such is the ministry by which alone holiness can be wrought in any child of Adam. We can be washed thoroughly from our iniquity

only in the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness; and faith in that fountain must be the fruit of the Spirit.— God who knows the deceitfulness and desperate wickedness of the heart, knows this; and, therefore, he gives the Holy Spirit that he may open our hearts to the sanctifying efficacy of the death and resurrection and intercession of him who “was called Jesus, because he would save his people from their sins.”

I finish with the solemn admonition before uttered, that we have sinned, and must be saved from sin, or we are lost forever. And I ask each of you, What will you do to be saved? Sin is upon us with its sentence and its corruption; what will you do with it? I have shown you this day what is good. I have set before you life and death. I have pointed you to the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world.”

“There is no other name under heaven given among men whereby ye must be saved;” but with him is mercy and plenteous redemption. Oh, how that divine blood cleanseth us from all guilt. With what celestial energy does that sacred flame which Christ gives, search out and purify us from all our dross and tin and filthiness. Without the atonement, vain would be our prayers and tears and struggles against sin; they would be only the cries and lamentations and reformations of a convict under the irrevocable sentence of death. “He that believeth not is condemned already.” “He that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.” Without the Spirit the holiest man would fall and perish. Stung by remorse, you make the most solemn vows against your evil propensities, and, by dint of natural resolution, you seem to have clean escaped them.— Alas, my friend, you deceive yourself. You will find that you resemble a strong swimmer, who carried by the current out of a whirlpool, thinks himself safe; but soon discovers that it was only an eddy, and that just in proportion to the distance he had reached, is the increased force with which the returning flood plunges him back into the vortex.

What will you do with your sin? Settle this question, I implore you, before it is too late. If you do nothing,

think what your sin will do with you, what it is now doing, what it will do in eternity. This to me is a solemn thought, that every human being may know certainly what will be his destiny after death. Perhaps we wish there were some doubt, some hope that somehow, without any effort or even consciousness on our part, we might be in a state of ultimate salvation. But there is none. Each for himself must choose—has actually chosen life or death, heaven or hell. My dear friend, make your choice and make it wisely. Make your calling and election sure. Do not neglect another moment the great salvation. Accept the redemption through the blood of Christ, even the forgiveness of sins which is so freely offered you.—And then set yourself strenuously by the aid of the promised Spirit to resist and subdue all the corruptions of your nature.

Do this and it shall be well with you. You will then be sure that you are right in your hope and in your life. Hourly shall you receive out of Christ's fullness fresh accessions of light and strength. Each day you will experience more and more of that secret ineffable peace which is vouchsafed to the soul after every victory over sin. Rest assured there is but one way for the Christian, and that is the straight and narrow way.

It is God's way, and therefore, difficult or not, you must keep it; for it is the only safe way, the only way which leads to life eternal. But, in truth, it is the only pleasant way. This we do not know because we will not enter this path, or will not persevere in it. When the people of Israel began to "eat of the old corn of the land," the manna ceased. And so, when a child of God begins to seek happiness in his former indulgences, in "his old sins," he grieves the Holy Spirit, and forfeits the heavenly consolations which once delighted his soul. The narrow way, the way of holiness, not only leads to life, but it is life. Walking there, serene are our days, peaceful our nights, happy—high above the disorders and miseries of a wretched world—shall be our hourly communion with God; happy,—full of assurance, of calm and sacred triumph shall be our dying hour; above all, what joy unspeakable and full of glory, when, having fought the good

fight, having finished our course, having kept the faith, we shall rise to our place among the crowned worshippers who forever celebrate the triumphs of redeeming grace, saying, "Salvation to our God, which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb." "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen."

Brethren, dearly beloved brethren, think on these things. "We are debtors not to the flesh to live after the flesh, for if ye live after the flesh ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live."



Sermon Fifteenth.

FELLOWSHIP in CHRIST'S SUFFERINGS.

"The fellowship of his sufferings."—PHILIPPIANS iii : 10.

A CHRISTIAN differs from all other men, the virtuous as well as the vicious, in this—that he is "a man in Christ;" and rest assured nothing can sustain us in the trying hour but the sense of this union. We may make a sincere profession, may read and pray devoutly, and devoutly attend all the appointed means of grace; but there will come sooner or later the season of darkness and depression, the affliction that smites and shatters our existence, the experience of misplaced or cruelly requited affections—the shock in business or health—and then no services, no faith in a written volume—nothing but a realizing consciousness of life in Jesus can support and console us.

Here in fact is the great blessedness of faith. We all know that love is the superlative Christian grace. Faith, however, has this pre-eminence over love; it not only precedes it—for love presupposes faith,—but it makes us one with Christ. Love establishes a moral union with Jesus; faith, a spiritual and mystical affinity which the Holy Spirit compares to a marriage, and by which he is identified with us, and we are identified with him.

That Christ bore our sins in his own body on the tree; that his righteousness is ours—the obedience of his humanity being regarded as our obedience; that we are

partakers of his name, of his wisdom, of his death, resurrection, and glory (for he says, "The glory which thou gavest me I have given them;")—if the Bible does not teach all this, then it teaches nothing as to salvation; it is the noblest of books, the most valuable of books, a treasury of knowledge, of history, eloquence, poetry; but it contains no Gospel, it is no revelation of the exceeding riches of grace in the redemption of sinners.

Our text refers to a different kind of communion with Jesus—a fellowship in suffering. The subject is mysterious and difficult. As we read the passage we discern, as through a mist, some vague glimpses of its import.—The words breathe a melancholy music which our hearts know and love; but as soon as we attempt to give our thoughts a definite form, to claim for guilty beings a participation in the Redeemer's sufferings, we are appalled and hasten to intercept the conclusion. The language before us is however, clear and positive as to such a fellowship. Let us humbly seek to penetrate its meaning.

Now to tell you that suffering enters largely into human life, that it is not an accident, a single dark thread traversing a bright texture, but is a most important element in the economy of our present existence, this would be only to repeat a truth which is too mournfully impressed upon us every day. The entire Bible supposes sorrow and suffering, and would be an unintelligible volume to beings always happy. Philosophers have speculated, sometimes wildly, sometimes ingeniously, as to the cause of pain and misery in the world; and no doubt they are right in ascribing much of it to sin and ignorance. But, after all such deductions, how much sorrow and suffering remain which cannot be traced to either blindness or guilt. Indeed it would be fearful to impute all suffering to these causes; for then those who are most afflicted are the most guilty.

"We suffer by the will of God;" it is plain that he means us to pass through this ordeal. A single fact is conclusive on this point; it is, that in our bodies, minds, hearts there are exquisite capacities for pain as well as pleasure. God intends that we shall experience sorrow

and anguish, or he would not have opened this source of bitterness in the very centre of our being. As man, Jesus was "made perfect through suffering;" and it is through the same austere discipline that we are to reach the true dignity and glory of our nature—to "come unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." No language can describe the bitterness and utter desolation of the heart under its first great bereavement, when it gives itself up to wretchedness—time and repeated afflictions not having yet taught us that no earthly sorrow is unbearable. But if we are Christians we shall experience the sweet uses of adversity. The religion of Jesus is designed to confer upon us a good far superior to any present enjoyment. To secure this good, afflictions are indispensable. And therefore in the Gospel system our sorrows are preferments; chastisements are the expressions of God's love. Afflictions are indeed the only blessings bestowed without being asked for—so necessary are they. And what the Bible declares is confirmed by every child of God. He feels that afflictions are distinctions. For him there is in sanctified suffering an alchemy which turns everything into gold.

To-day, however, we are to consider not all the ills which are the inevitable lot of human life, but those in which we sympathize with Jesus. The text is not an isolated passage. The same Apostle says elsewhere, "As the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ." "As ye are partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye be also of the consolations;" "If we suffer we shall also reign with him." And Peter calls us to "rejoice inasmuch as we are partakers of Christ's sufferings." There is therefore between the Redeemer and his disciples a community of sorrows,—a truth this, our apprehension of which will depend upon our knowledge of the great mystery of the Gospel,—will be in proportion to our spiritual discernment of the grand peculiarity of that religion which the Saviour came to teach or rather to embody.

In natural religion we can know God only as a creator and moral governor. Under this economy, he is the in-

visible Jehovah, dwelling in light unapproachable, whom we can never find out by searching. He reveals himself to us in his works and providences; but the more closely we study these oracles, the more are our thoughts baffled, and we can only exclaim, "Lo these are parts of his ways, but how little a portion is heard of him."

In the Bible God has made a transcendently glorious revelation of himself. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Of this "Word" it is said, "In Him was life." But between us and this "Word," in his original glory, there was an impassible chasm. "The Word," however, "was made flesh;" and thus life was brought near to us. Hence he says, "My flesh which I will give for the life of the world." In the dispensation of the Gospel we have Deity in humanity; and in the theology of the Gospel, piety is spiritual, personal union with this glorious Incarnation. Jesus constantly declares that he came to communicate himself to us; to be the vine infusing into the branches the very same sap by which its own vitality is sustained. And the office of the Holy Spirit is to "glorify" this mysterious Being; to apply his atonement; and so to incorporate us into him, that we live because he lives—our life being hid in him. "I in them and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one,"—this is the wonderful consummation designed for those who are Christ's. "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live, yet not I but Christ liveth in me." We are partakers of Christ's life—his trials and sorrows—as well as his righteousness, strength and victory.

These general remarks you readily comprehend. They are, indeed, the doctrines everywhere found in the Sacred Books; and they teach us what is meant by our fellowship in Christ's sufferings. This illustrious Being is closer to us than a brother, more than a member of the same family and partaker of our human flesh and blood; he is identified with his members, and they have communion in his sorrows, because by faith they have union with him in mind, in heart, in spirit, in life.

But upon such a subject this general interpretation is not enough. We must enter deeper into a truth so full of instruction and consolation. And that we may go at once into detail, let us glance at some of the causes of the Saviour's sufferings—I mean those we can share with him. In this view we will feel that, as we are true and holy, his griefs and sorrows will be our griefs and sorrows; we shall “drink of the cup that he drank of, and be baptized with the baptism that he was baptized with.”

Of these causes I take, first, that enmity to truth which Jesus everywhere encountered. He suffered as the advocate of truth. “To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth.” This testimony exposed him to hatred, calumny, persecution, martyrdom. His kingdom was not, and is not of this world, because it is the empire of truth. He is the king of truth; and you know the conduct of the world to this king, when he was in its power. “Ye seek to kill me, a man that told you the truth.” Meek, lowly, holy, gentle, the impersonation of love and goodness, the world could not endure his presence. He was seized, dragged to the bar as a felon, and cruelly murdered.

This spirit was not peculiar to that age, nor to the actors in that dismal tragedy. Every loyal disciple will participate with his Master in enduring enmity and malice for the truth's sake. “Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?” Think of the transcendent value of all truth, especially of religious truth. Is he not my best friend who is faithful to me, and seeks to rescue me from error and falsehood? Is not this fidelity the very first attribute we profess to desire in a friend? Yet, when, where, has religious truth been uttered, without exciting the enmity of the human heart? If patriarchs, prophets and apostles could have been refuted, they would probably have escaped persecution; but because the words they proclaimed extorted a verdict from men's consciences, they were pursued with implacable malice. The multitude whom John saw under the altar, was composed of those

who "were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held; therefore white robes were given unto every one of them." In the Old Testament we behold God raising up and sending prophet after prophet; but men persecuted and slew them for speaking the truth. In the New Testament we see Jew and Roman and Greek, priest and people, the noble and the vile, the learned and the ignorant, all inflamed with this unrelenting animosity; eagerly imbruing their hands in the blood of those who were true to the truth. Nor is the human heart different now. In the world, in the church, in the family, that prophecy is still fulfilled, "Think not I am come to send peace; I am come to send not peace but a sword." If we imitate the faithfulness of the Redeemer, if we identify ourselves with his people and his truth, we will share the treatment he met, we will have fellowship with him in suffering for the truth.

Another source of the Saviour's sorrows was, the disorders wrought by sin and which he saw everywhere around him. His tears, his deepest anguish, his bitterest lamentations were for these spiritual desolations.

True he was touched by human poverty, affliction, sickness, bereavement. So tender were his sympathies with man, that he took all our miseries into familiar companionship with his own heart. "He bore our griefs and carried our sorrows." No class was so degraded that he stooped not to relieve its wretchedness; nor could any personal weariness, exhaustion, injury, insult or pain dry up the fountain of love in his bosom. But it was the moral blight, the guilt and degradation of our race, which smote his soul and made him a "man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." And here, again, if we are Christ's, we will communicate in his sufferings.

His Father was dishonored by the sins—the disorders, which filled the earth; for every sin is an attempt to break down those munitions behind which are entrenched the stabilities of his government. Jesus was jealous of his Father's honor. "I have glorified thee upon the earth," he exclaims—finding in the vindication of his Father's honor here upon the very spot where it had been most insulted, a sublime compensation for all he had

endured. When Judas goes out to marshal the band which is to seize him, he anticipates with rapture that cross which was to shed such effulgence upon the divine character and government; uttering those strange words of impatient exultation, "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him." And, if we have his spirit, we will share in this zeal. Rivers of water will run down our eyes because men keep not God's laws. We will know something of the anguish with which the Redeemer poured out his soul in that mournful cry, "O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee."

Jesus wept over the corruptions and disorders around him, not only because he was zealous for his Father's glory, but because he loved man. He groaned in spirit, he was bathed in tears as he looked upon our lost and ruined condition; as he saw rational immortal beings whom he had formed for happiness and glory, preferring sin and wretchedness, sinking into the abysses of woe, and repelling all the mercy and compassion which had come to seek and to save them. And, if our hearts have been renewed by the Holy Spirit, it will be impossible for us not to be touched by the same anguish. We will share some measure of the deep, melting, gushing sorrow which convulsed his frame as he approached Jerusalem; and which, as he walked the streets of the doomed city, wrung from him that bitter wail of defeated love and patience, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not."

Jesus "suffered being tempted." Here is a third source of the Redeemer's sorrows; and you know it is especially as to temptation that we are assured of the closest sympathy between us and our compassionate High Priest.

Sympathy—this word literally means suffering together; and in this element of our constitution we find one of the most mysterious and wonderful psychological phenomena, a principle which God has established to bind us together and to give us, from our own experience,

some conception of his own heart. By this law we are so linked together—by ties so sensitive—that a blow upon our neighbor instantly strikes us; and this *commiseration* identifies us with his sufferings, summoning up our affections, and enlisting our generous impulses in his behalf. “Who is weak” says the Apostle, “and I am not weak? Who is offended and I burn not?”

The priesthood of Jesus is founded on his humanity. He can be touched with a feeling of our infirmities because he is human, and because his humanity is ours. For the same reason we are touched with the feeling of his sorrows and sufferings. And I may appeal to every Christian, whether he is not conscious of a sympathy, a mystical affinity which so identifies us with Jesus, that all the finest issues of our nature vibrate to his sufferings,—that in every blow the Redeemer feels, as the rude storms bow his gentle head, there is a counter blow upon our tenderest susceptibilities,—that the reproaches of those who reproached this adorable Being fall upon us; that the impress of his cross is upon our hearts. To this mysterious power of the Saviour's sufferings the prophet refers in that remarkable prediction, “They shall look upon him whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him as one that is in bitterness for his first-born.” Nor let any say that this is only the natural pity we feel for any innocent sufferer. No, and again no. There is between Jesus and those who have his Spirit, a sympathy which makes them one, an affinity so intimate and dear and wonderful, that their bosoms throb with the griefs which stung him. Not a pain of that august sufferer but smites upon the renewed soul. The thorns which pierce the head must shoot pangs through the members. The anguish at the heart must pervade the whole body.

But I have digressed from the topic before us. I am now speaking, not of this general sympathy with the Saviour, but of our fellowship with him in the sufferings of temptation. And as to this all is clear. He “*was in all points tempted like as we are.*” Whatever then the artifices or malice of the assault, whatever the loathsome

suggestions, the unsearchable machinations of the tempter, we only endure what he endured. Our "prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears" are the echoes of his sobbings and cryings in the days of his flesh. When the billows are highest, faith sees him with us in the vessel. When the furnace is heated seven times hotter than it is wont to be heated, we know that he has been there before us, we feel that he is there with us,—his heart taught by bitter experience to pity and succor us in time of need.

I will add here only one thought more. It is suggested by that remarkable passage in which the Apostle speaks of his completing afflictions which Jesus left behind. "Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh, for his body's sake, which is the church."

These are astonishing words. What, has the Saviour, then, left any portion of his sufferings unfinished? In the literal meaning of the term, such a doctrine would be the grossest heresy;—the very heresy of the Church of Rome, which teaches that in the Mass the sacrifice of the cross is repeated. The Holy Spirit seems to have anticipated this impiety, when, with such frequency and emphasis, the contrast is drawn between the defects of the Jewish sacrifices "offered often-times," and the perfect and eternal efficacy of the "one offering of the body of Jesus once for all." But there is a sense in which a supplement of the Saviour's afflictions is filled up by the faithful Christian. The oblation of the cross is perpetuated, carried on—not materially, but spiritually—in every heart, in every life which is consecrated to a crucified Jesus and to his suffering cause. As the Apostle says, "the church is Christ's body." This church is now engaged in arduous conflicts, exposed to stern trials and painful sufferings. So identified is Jesus with his church, that those who persecute it, persecute him. But, now, the griefs and distresses of this church are the griefs and distresses of all who are truly Christ's. Never, never did patriot, weeping over his bleeding country, never did mother, bending over her

suffering child, know sorrow and sympathy deeper than those which afflict the soul of the Christian in all the afflictions of Zion. "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept." Why? Are these captives bathed in tears for the fortunes they had lost? for homes from which they had been driven? for the hardships they endure as exiles in a distant land? No, they weep, their eyes run down, "when they remember Zion." "We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof. If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning; if I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy."

So absorbing was the Apostle's love for the church, that he exulted in the thought of sacrificing everything for her prosperity. "Whether we be afflicted it is for your consolation and salvation." "Who now *rejoice* in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ, for his body's sake which is the church." Heroical man,—or rather, as he himself exclaims,—miracle of grace and mercy! We murmur if our ease, avarice, pride are called to surrender anything for the cause of Jesus; he coveted as a dower, as a sublime pleasure, the austere glory of suffering, when in suffering he had fellowship with him "who loved the church and gave himself for it." In the great atonement on Calvary we find a plea for indolence, covetousness, sin; he felt that the cross made suffering not only a virtue, a necessity, but a glory, a pleasure, and that the Saviour's sacrifice can avail us nothing, ought to avail us nothing, unless, entering into the spirit, we offer ourselves also with all we have as a great sacrifice on the altar of the Redeemer's kingdom.

From the causes, let us pass, now, to the nature of the Saviour's sufferings; and here we will find there is fellowship between him and his members.

In the Epistle to the Corinthians there is a very striking definition of evangelical sorrow. The words rendered "*godly sorrow*," are, in the original, *sorrow according to God*." The true penitent, the humble contrite

heart, sorrows according to God ; sorrows as God sorrows. But what meaning can we attach to this language? None, certainly, if we study only the revelation which God has made of himself in nature and providence. When we turn, however, to the other revelation, the manifestation of Deity in our humanity, we comprehend these words, they are full of instruction. Here we see the sorrow of a divine Being. And though in intensity there can never be griefs like his, yet in their nature they were sorrows of which a Christian largely partakes.

Take, for example, one character of his sufferings, which the Son of God often mentioned as most painful and oppressive. I mean their loneliness. He "trode the wine-press alone;" and is not every child of God alone in his deepest experiences and sorest trials? The depressing influence of this forlorn feeling upon our Apostle, you all know. You recollect how he "thanked God and took courage," when a few friends met him journeying, wearily and broken in spirits, over the dreary Pontine Marshes. And what a sad desolate tone in that complaint, "At my first answer no man stood with me, but all forsook me."

This spiritual loneliness we all have known. In his profoundest exercises the Christian is always solitary. Every true, noble soul, every loving heart, must live and love and suffer alone. Not that the true disciple of Jesus is a cloistered hermit. No, no. You meet him in the streets, in the market, on change, and he seems to you like any other man; but he is not like any other man. In his hidden conflicts and spiritual sorrows, he lives in a different world from that occupied by other men. His heart knows its own bitterness, with which a stranger intermeddled not, and for which the world has neither appreciation nor sympathy.

It is ever a peculiarity of the gracious and purifying influence of the Cross over the heart, that it is a solitary discipline. "I will pour upon the house of David and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplication. And they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him

as one that mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him as one that is in bitterness for his first-born. In that day there shall be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon. And the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Levi apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Shimei apart, and their wives apart. All the families that remain, every family apart and their wives apart."

If the Saviour was solitary in his griefs, the gracious soul comprehends what it is to have fellowship with him in that spiritual solitude. Just so far as he possesses the spirit of Jesus, the believer will feel himself alone; alone in the world, and often alone in the family, suffering as a witness to the truth; alone in his tears and supplications over the miseries which sin hath wrought and for which his soul weeps "in secret places;" alone in his stern hours of darkness and temptation; alone—alas that it should be so!—alone in his undying love for the church, and in his deep anguish over the desolations of Zion.

In the verse from which our text is taken the Apostle uses a word which lets us farther into the fellowship which the Christian has in the sufferings of Christ.—That word is "conformable." "That I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death." We participate, then, in the Saviour's sufferings, when in what we endure we are assimilated to him as our pattern; when his crucifixion finds its counterpart in our own experience, so that we are crucified with him; when we suffer in his strength and in his spirit; when we recognize in our sufferings the evil of sin; when we feel (what the term "vicarious" implies) that his suffering was justly our doom; in short, when we exemplify the sublime truth taught in the death of Jesus, that God is love, and that to love is to welcome sacrifice and suffering.

In the whole life, but especially in the death of Jesus, we have the true perfection of love; for we have perfect self-immolation. With sacrifices we are familiar enough; the strong everywhere sustaining themselves by the sacrifice of the weak. The Gospel turns this spirit upon ourselves; and we are conformed to Christ's death, we participate in Christ's sufferings when we enter into his self-sacrifice. What it cost him to "make his soul an offering for sin" we can never comprehend. If all the misery which human hearts have known from the creation; if all the pangs which have pierced the souls of widows and orphans, and parents wailing for their children; if all the woes of nations smitten by famine, desolated by pestilence, exterminated by war; if all the tortures of the dungeon, the rack, the scaffold, the fire—if all this anguish could be concentrated and emphasized, it would be a sort of pleasure compared with the agony which bowed and rent his soul. All this he foresaw; yet he shrank not, he welcomed all. And it is as we are absorbed into a spirit of self-sacrifice in any way resembling his, that we are made conformable unto Christ's death. We have communion in his sufferings as we die with Christ unto self, and rise with him to our proper life—the life of self-surrender to the will of God. The calm, tranquil energy of the Redeemer's soul; the deep strength of principle which nothing could shake; the serene courage which looked down upon menaces, clamor, contumely, suffering, sacrifice, death,—this is the temper which pours contempt upon the intrepidity of heroes, but which the Holy Spirit infuses into the humble Christian. And so far as we are imbued with this celestial virtue, and as, thus armed, we do battle with the world's sin, and suffer in this sublime warfare—winning and wearing that richest of all diadems for mortal brows, a crown of thorns—just so far do we "know Jesus, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death."

There are two other aspects of the Redeemer's sufferings in which a devoted soul has fellowship with him; but I can only indicate them in so many words. I refer to the consolations which the Christian experiences along

the thorny path in which he follows the Saviour's footsteps; and to the efficacy of suffering in exalting and perfecting our nature.

It was no easy task the Son of Man undertook. So arduous and fearful was his mission, that his not failing nor being discouraged [Isaiah xlii: 4] was predicted as a sublime triumph of almighty power. And what sustained and cheered his spirit when weary and careworn, when tried and tempted, when thwarted and often baffled, but ever sublimely erect? It was those secret consolations of which he said, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of." It was the approving voice from heaven as he ascended from the waters of baptism. It was the strengthening ministry of angels after his temptation and in the garden. It was the presence of his Father—"I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me"—"Behold the hour cometh, yea, and is now come, that ye shall be scattered every man to his own, and shall leave me alone, and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me." In a word, it was the "joy set before him" of final triumph—that he should see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied.

And the Apostle emphatically marks our participation in the Saviour's consolations and joys, as the fruit of our partnership in his sufferings. "As ye are partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye be also of the consolations."—"As the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ." It must be night before the stars appear; and the Redeemer's consolations and joys can arise in the heart only when we experience something of the sorrow and desolateness which darkened all his days.

Sharing the joys which mingled with the sufferings of Jesus, the Christian—as I have said—participates also, in the ennobling, exalting, perfecting influence of those sufferings. Ponder these remarkable words: "For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through suffering;" "Though he were a son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered." The word *character* is liter-

ally a Greek term derived from the verb *charasso*, to engrave with a sharp instrument, and means a will framed and fashioned by repeated strokes and impressions. The perfection of Christian character is a will perfectly moulded to the will of God. This the Man Jesus attained through trials and painful conflicts. He ever had a filial heart, but it was by sharp discipline and by successive acts of resolute volition that there was developed and built up in his humanity a spirit which in the extremest misery still clung to his Father's will with untravailing confidence and submission.

This severe education is indispensable to the full development and highest excellence of our nature. It would have been necessary had man never fallen. Of all the elements of this education the humanity of Jesus partook, until in him innocence rose to perfection. And Christ living in us—the temper of Jesus—his spirit, his life in the Christian—is made perfect by the same ordeal. “By the one offering of himself, he *hath perfected forever them that are sanctified.*” The Christian, then, not only communicates in the expiation finished on the cross, and in the power of that cross to calm the conscience and subdue the depravity of the heart, but he is a partaker of the perfection which his Saviour achieved by suffering; nor is there any moral excellence of Christ's humanity, which we (yet not we, but Christ living in us) may not attain. But how? By “sanctification;” by sanctification in the sense in which Jesus says, “For their sakes I sanctify myself; that is by self-devotement, by a self-sacrifice conformable to the sacrifice which Jesus made of himself. Conformable, I say, and with reason. For in the Christian's experience there is a counterpart to the Saviour's advent, life, death. There is first the hour of conversion, of inward manifestation; when, after bitter pangs, it pleases God to reveal his Son in him; when Jesus enters the humble heart, and, amid angelic songs and heavenly joys, is formed within the soul and becomes “the hope of glory.” Then, there is the long stern ordeal; the painful protracted struggle with sin; the weary years of conflict, discouragement, temptation, fear, darkness; the days of strong crying

and tears; the imploring supplication, "If it be possible let this cup pass away."—And, then, there comes the victory; when self-immolation is finished, when, with a resignation, a preference—in which his wishes, his interests, his happiness are all swallowed up in God—the Christian can exclaim, "Nevertheless, not my will but thine be done;" when his soul takes the very print of Christ's death, and Christ's resurrection life reigns in his heart and controls his life.

My brethren, the subject upon which I have been addressing you, furnishes one of the most infallible evidences of real piety. Convictions, feelings, excitements, joys may deceive us; but there can be no mistake if we have fellowship with Christ in his sufferings. Both of the Gospel ordinances are designed to teach us our identity with a suffering Saviour. In Baptism we are "buried with him, and raised up again" with him. In the Supper we spiritually eat his body, and drink his blood. And if our conduct vindicate the reality of this union; if, not only in our tastes and joys, but in suffering and sorrow, we are one with Jesus, we cannot doubt "whose we are, and whom we serve."

Brotherhood in toil and sacrifices proves a brotherhood in allegiance to a common cause. When we see the three Hebrews in the furnace, or Paul and Silas in the dungeon at Philippi, we feel at once that those who thus suffer together are knit together in heart. Oh, he may be only a hollow courtier, a fawning parasite and sycophant, who serves his prince in the day of prosperity. Let the blasts of war be heard, let a hostile army invade the realm, let the throne be in danger,—then the souls of men will be tried. The selfish and faithless minions of court favor will shrink away; but the loyal and true in heart will leap forward to share the perils of their king; they will "rejoice to be partakers of his sufferings"—to abide the worst for and with him—to "follow his white plume" into the thickest of the fight, and there still to stand side by side with him, where the death shot is quickest, and the sabre flash is fastest and brightest.

Our subject has another lesson ; it teaches us that to be absorbed in Christ is the true life of faith. "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." Natural life ends with death. Spiritual life begins with death—a death unto sin. "If Christ be in you the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness." "To me to live is Christ." The Christian's life is Christ's life working out itself in us and through us—Christ's inner life ;—so that we have fellowship in his trials, his sorrows, his joys, his strength, his victory. We are "risen with Christ," we are "raised up and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." It is little to say that a Christian looks up from earth to heaven ; he ought to look down from heaven to earth. This is our highest life ; and we forfeit the sublime joys of faith, because we shrink from this life, we are not willing to lose the life of sensuous happiness, that we may find this spiritual life. This is really to lose the soul ; and the gain of the whole world would be no compensation for such a bereavement.

Would that I knew how to impress this great truth upon you as I feel it ; to bring you to comprehend that as Christ suffered that he might enter into his glory, so we can rise to our true glory here and hereafter only by having fellowship with Christ in his sufferings. My friends, the glory of the soul is to grow into the "express image" (literally "the expressed character") of God in Christ,—to live as Christ lived, to love as he loved, to share his conflicts, his sacrifices, his heavenly succors and illuminations. Sin wrongs the soul by despoiling it of this sympathy with Jesus in his aims, his feelings, his earnest and holy self-immolation. It is for this reason that, in the Scriptures, sin is the greatest, the only evil. Affliction, poverty, disease, pain are not to be compared with it ; they may strengthen our true life ; but sin destroys it. And, yet, how impotent all our exhortations to warn you from inflicting this worst injury upon yourselves. Laws may be enacted to guard men from being murdered ; but what laws can protect

them from suicide? And so here. Our admonitions may arm you against outward enemies; but against the worldliness, selfishness, secret sins which strike the garland of peace from your highest life,—all our entreaties and expostulations are powerless.

Men and brethren, the Christian has a proof of Christ's life and sufferings and death and resurrection superior to all argument. He has communion with Christ in these things. A crucified, ascended Saviour is not to him a theological tenet, not a doctrine only; it is a soul-rejoicing experience. He "hath the witness in himself" that Jesus, not only lived, but now lives—lives for him and in him. The greatest truths are ever known through the heart; and this sublimest of all truths, this amazing sacrifice which Eternal Love has made for guilty man, can be comprehended only by the heart,—by communion with that Love in its sorrows, sacrifices, triumphs, joys.

Such a knowledge of Jesus will engage us in a life like his—the only life in which we can know our highest blessedness—a life of self-denial and self-conquest, of clear decided activity for God; and this, from our fellowship, our oneness of heart with him; our love carrying out the life he lived—causing us to be "always bearing about in the body the dying of our Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body,"—constraining us to make the sacrifices which he made, and which are the essence, the perfection of love. With this sublime life the unconverted man has no affinity, he hates it. He may wish to reach heaven, just as a beggar, sunk in sin and corruption, may wish to be a king; but for the discipline by which the child of God is made "meet for an inheritance among the saints in light," he has no more heart than the depraved vagabond has for the training by which a young prince is prepared for the throne.

But you my beloved brethren, rejoice that you are partakers of this heavenly life. And be not satisfied

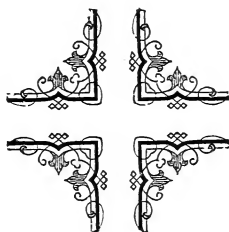
with sympathies which beat with languid, intermittent pulsations. Enter into the spirit of our Apostle, who longed to know more of Christ—to have more of the mind that was in Christ Jesus,—to experience more of his firm, disinterested, holy devotion to his Father and the salvation of a lost world,—to partake more largely and cheerfully in his sorrows and in the unconquerable will to do right which rises calmly in the bosom, bidding us to suffer and be strong even as he suffered and was strong. For my own part, when I reflect upon this mystical oneness with Jesus, I feel an assurance which no language can utter that Jesus, not only was on earth, but is now in heaven; and, with a calm, rejoicing faith I anticipate the happiness and glory of our eternal destiny. As we have been partakers of the earthly life of the Son of God, so shall we be of his heavenly. “In the regeneration,”—in the new heavens and new earth where dwelleth righteousness,—“when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of his glory, ye which have followed me shall sit upon twelve thrones.” “Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God; when Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.” “The glory which thou gavest me, have I given them.” If we suffer we shall also reign with him.” Passages like these could easily be multiplied, and how sublime the future of which they assure us.

Natural life seeks contentment with the present. Spiritual life—the life of Christ in us—is full of irrepressible longings and aspirations. What a privilege to be “made conformable” to the death of Christ, that we may be made conformable to his life in glory; to be “partakers of Christ’s sufferings, that when his glory shall be revealed we may be glad also with exceeding joy.” This prospect caused Moses to esteem the reproach of Christ greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt. This caused the Apostles to take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake, to “rejoice that they were partakers of Christ’s sufferings.” The zeal and patience

of that cloud of witnesses who compass us around, the sleepless vigilance of those faithful sentinels who age after age have trimmed and replenished the beacon lights of the Gospel, the unshaken constancy of the noble army of martyrs who welcomed contempt and death for the truth, the victorious agonies of saints, prophets, apostles,—all these have been the triumphs of Christ's life in his people, of Christ's everlasting love shed abroad in their souls,—of love suffering with Christ, that it might be glorified together with him. Than this life, God can bestow upon us nothing more divine. In imparting to us this life, Jesus gives us a boon infinitely more precious than the material universe; he gives us himself; his strength, peace, joy now; his honor, his blessedness hereafter, "when he shall come to be glorified *in* his saints, and to be admired *in* all them that believe."

I am far from supposing that I have fully interpreted the sublime passage which has been the theme of this discourse; but I have said enough to disclose to you many sources of consolation and strength, to shew you that, while the very sunshine in which the wicked bask ripens them for destruction, they are most happy and honored to whom it is given on behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but to suffer for him and with him. If we are called to endure tribulation for the Gospel, let it rejoice our souls to reflect, that we are filling what remains of the afflictions of Jesus, drinking some drops which he left for us in his own cup. If we are persecuted, he has fellowship with us, and feels that the enmity which assails us is directed against him. In our weakness, his strength is ours. In our conflicts, his victories are ours. In our bereavements and sorrows, his grace is ours. He had not where to lay his weary head; that we might have his bosom on which to lean our fevered brows. He endured the cross and despised the shame, that, instead of weeping and wailing, we might share his immortal blessedness,—that instead of everlasting contempt we might sit down with him on his throne and receive a crown of glory which shall never fade away.

Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power, that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ. To him be praise and dominion forever and ever. AMEN.



Sermon Sixteenth.

ELIJAH'S FAITH AND DEFECT.

“AND as Obadiah was in the way, behold Elijah met him; and he knew him, and fell on his face and said, Art thou my lord Elijah?”—1 KINGS xviii: 7.

IF we carefully examine the biographies of those who have been heroes, both in the world and in the church, I think we will detect in the experience of each of them a critical era which seems to have made him what he afterwards became; an hour when there came upon him a strange mysterious sense of power that gave his soul a strong continuous forward impulse, by which he was himself mastered, and by which he began to master others.

With the servants of God it is a singular phenomenon, too, that—as if to keep us humble, and to remind us of our entire dependence on divine grace—such experiences are almost always succeeded by seasons of peculiar depression and infirmity, which appear to be wholly irreconcilable with the inward revelation of strength in which they once gloried; seasons in which they disappoint all our estimate of their characters, and—what is very remarkable—prove most lamentably defective in the very traits for which they had been most distinguished. On some great public occasion how grandly they loom up above the dead level of humanity. But when the pageant is over, they begin to feel that admiration is not love, that enthusiasm is not faith, that popularity is not happiness, and they sink into a despondency and weakness proportioned to their former excitement.

My text is taken from a passage in the life of Elijah which most signally exemplifies each of these observations; let us enter into the matter.

I. The prophet is here introduced as he comes forth from the retirement in which he had been communing with himself and with God. A great part of this seclusion was spent in the garret of an humble cottage, where the frugal widow of Zarephath had supplied his wants. He who was "the Lord of glory" had not where to lay his head. "Of whom the world was not worthy, they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens, and in caves of the earth." And he who was to ascend in a chariot of fire, abode in the loft of a poor woman's cabin. Here God concealed him, ostensibly from the rage of the tiger Ahab; but in reality that, by solitary meditation and prayer, he might recruit his strength and build up in himself the faith and courage which were soon to be called into exercise.

Do not hastily pass this fact; it deserves our particular attention at this day. The Saviour's ministry lasted only three years; yet we find him often retiring apart for secret prayer and intercourse with his Father. Paul was an apostle "not of men, neither by man," and he glowed with a zeal and love which seemed irrepressible; yet he sequestered himself for three years among the rocky mountain heights of the Red Sea—scenes hallowed by Moses and Elijah—that he might give himself to silent devotion and contemplation before entering upon his glorious mission. And our prophet dwells for nearly three years in a little chamber, alone with God and his own thoughts.

Now, it seems, there is no leisure for calm reflection, for austere self examination, and for soul invigorating communion with the Father of lights. All is haste, excitement, eagerness and restlessness. And the consequence is, that there never was an age in which everything was so superficial, in which there were so many volumes of literature and theology, of essays and discourses that are only infinitesimal particles of ore stolen from classical mines, and beaten out into thin, glittering

gold-foil. Writing, reading, preaching, character, religion are showy and shallow. The world and the church are impatient of everything which does not effervesce and sparkle. We must have sensation books, sensation sermons, sensation piety, sensation everything.

Looking at Elijah as he returns from solitude into active life, the first thing which strikes us is his sublime faith and courage. O, but such a spirit was worth all the prayer, meditation, seclusion of his little attic; for he now comes forth in invincible might and rejoices as a strong man to run a race. "And it came to pass after many days, that the word of the Lord came to Elijah in the third year, saying, Go shew thyself unto Ahab." During three years the king had hated him. Now his rage knew no bounds, for the whole land was smitten with famine, and the prophet was regarded as the cause of this terrible calamity. That he might be seized and put to death, detectives had been dispatched in every quarter, and an oath had been exacted from all the subjects of the empire, that they neither harbored, nor knew of the hiding place of this enemy of the nation. But God says to him, "Go shew thyself unto Ahab." That is enough. There is no hesitation, no questioning, no "conferring with flesh and blood." And *this* is faith. We are willing to do what reason and prudence dictate; but faith takes God at his word and obeys, leaving consequences to him.

I spake, just now, of the necessity of secret prayer and communion with heaven; let none, however, suppose that this requires us to shut ourselves up in convents and cloisters. While, in solitude, our prophet was replenishing his soul with a fresh outfit of strength, Obadiah was at court, holding fast his integrity in the midst of all its dissipations, winning the confidence of the monarch by his uprightness, and—in spite of dissolute princes and satraps, and of the fierce bigotry of the queen—protecting the prophets of the Lord when exposed to danger. "I, even I only am left," said Elijah; but he was mistaken. Not only had God seven thousand hidden ones in Israel, but among the heathen, in Zidon, the native country of Jezebel, he had a poor widow to

minister to his persecuted servant; and in the precincts of the royal palace was an officer of the highest rank, who had not defiled his garments and was full of faith and loyalty to him.

Obadiah was now upon an official journey, and he is the first person whom Elijah meets. As soon as he sees the man of God, he salutes him with the profoundest reverence. "And he knew him, and he fell on his face, and said, Art thou that my lord Elijah?" Can it be that thou art thus venturing abroad? "And Elijah answered him, I am; Go tell thy lord, Behold I am here." The governor feared the Lord, but the intrepid faith of our prophet was not for him. They that dwell in king's houses are generally clothed in soft raiment within as well as without; and this courtier is amazed at the undaunted bearing of the solitary traveller. Nay, he cannot believe it possible that the Tishbite was really going to brave this raging lion; and he sees nothing but grief and ruin to himself, if he should bear to the monarch an invitation which had so much the air of a challenge. "And he said, What have I sinned, that thou wouldst deliver thy servant unto the hand of Ahab to slay me? As the Lord liveth there is no nation or kingdom whither my lord hath not sent to seek thee; and when they said, He is not there, he took an oath of the kingdom and nation, that they found thee not. And now thou sayest, Go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah is here; and it shall come to pass as soon as I am gone from thee, that the Spirit of the Lord shall carry thee whither I know not; and so when I come and tell Ahab, and he cannot find thee, he shall slay me. But I thy servant fear the Lord from my youth. Has it not been told my lord what I did when Jezebel slew the prophets of the Lord, how I hid a hundred of the Lord's prophets in a cave, and fed them with bread and water? And now thou sayest, Go tell thy lord, Behold Elijah is here; and he shall slay me."

The prophet, however, assures him that he is thoroughly in earnest in desiring to encounter the king.— "And Elijah said, As the Lord of hosts liveth before whom I stand, I will surely shew myself unto him this

day." I am a poor, hated, despised man, and he is a crowned king; but I will meet him; yea he shall come to me. I will magnify my office. Let him come here to me, and he shall know this day that there is a prophet in Israel.

The interview between Elijah and Ahab now takes place. It is brief but full of instruction; and there are two things in it especially worthy of our consideration. First, observe the accusation. "And it came to pass, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him, Art thou he that troubleth Israel?" In this question we feel how already the pride and vengeance of the king have quailed before the fearless, tranquil dignity of the man of God. He had sent spies through all the land to arrest the prophet that he might be executed; now he can find courage only for invective and calumny—"Art thou he that troubleth Israel?" A similar charge was brought, you remember, against Jesus, of whom it was said "He stirreth up the people." In all ages, in fact, the world has regarded as enemies those who have told them the truth; so that even the amiable historian Tacitus—while scouting the pretence that the Christians had set fire to Rome—still affirmed that it was right to destroy them, because they were foes to the peace and happiness of mankind.

Let us not be surprised at this. The truth will disturb the false security of wicked men, and will thus arouse their hostility. "I am not come," said the Saviour, "to send peace, I am come to send a sword." But who is to blame for this? Certainly not those who tell us the truth. They are our best friends, the friends of our race; for if men would receive the Gospel and live under its influence, there would be universal happiness. The world, however, hates the truth spoken—as it hated him who was Incarnate Truth, although his whole life was passed in "doing good;"—and hence, whenever faithfully preached, it is accused of "troubling Israel." Churches hate it, because it assails old hereditary errors. Ministers hate it, because it disquiets those to whom they have cried, "Peace, peace, when there is no peace." Families hate it, because it interrupts the

harmony of those who were lulling themselves under a fatal delusion, because, as our Lord declares, it is a sword severing earthly affections, and inflaming resentment and bitterness against those members of a household whose hearts have been changed and who are faithful to their convictions.

The accusation. But mark now the fearless answer with which the prophet retorts this unjust imputation. "And he answered, I have not troubled Israel; but thou and thy father's house; in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord." A Christian should count it a distinguished honor, when he is attacked with the same weapons which were used against prophets, apostles, the Saviour himself; and he must be ever armed with the same heroic spirit. Let us not deceive ourselves, my friends; there ever has been, and ever must be a conflict between Christ and the world, between truth and error. And when placed by God in situations which require it, a Christian must know how to unfurl this banner, we must be uncompromising in our conduct, and resist the torrent, and endure the enmity, or we shall not only be faithless to our own souls and to truth, but we shall betray one of the most solemn trusts ever confided to man or angel.

You are in a church, the errors of which God has clearly shown you. If you "come out of her," and thus openly condemn those errors, you will awaken animosity in the bosoms of those who are dear to you, and whose many excellences justly engage your esteem. But remember, that if—through an unwillingness to wound a pastor whom you respect, or members with whom you have been long associated—you continue to identify yourself with their communion, you are recreant to your conscience, you insult the Holy Spirit which has enlightened you, you wrong your own spiritual nature; and those whom your fidelity might have saved, but whom you thus confirm in disobedience, will rise up against you at the bar of God.

You belong to a family in which old ancestral sanctities of opinion are regarded with superstitious reverence, in which prescriptive prejudices of birth,

education, religion, have been transmitted with other heirlooms and are devoutly honored. In spite of all the pride and intolerance in which you were reared, and of the great solicitude employed to keep your mind shut to the light, to prevent you from searching the Scriptures for yourself, and to rivet upon you the influence of schoolmasters, books, preachers, companions who might reinforce your hereditary prejudices,—Jesus has revealed himself and his truth in you, he hath shined in your heart to give you a saving knowledge of his word. Now, if you are true to this heavenly light, and confer not with flesh and blood, and nobly leave “father, mother, sister, brother,” that you may follow your Redeemer, you will feel the sharpness of the sword of which he warns you, you will be treated as a troubler of the domestic harmony and love, you will have to endure reproaches for deserting the faith of your forefathers, perhaps for having dishonored the name you bear. Very well. But recollect, if you shrink from all this, if—through dread of the displeasure of those dear to you—you remain silent and give your countenance to these prejudices, you are most perfidious to those whom you were sent to bless, you sin against a light they have not, you are false to God and your own eternal interests, you are ashamed of Jesus, and he will be ashamed of you before his Father and the holy angels.

I need not dwell longer on this point, you can easily apply the intrepid protest of our prophet to other cases. If Elijah, if Paul lived at this day, we know they would abhor the thought of any compromise of truth, and we must imitate them. A Christian should not only be ready always, with meekness, to give an answer to him that asketh a reason for his hope and obedience, but he ought to know how, when it becomes necessary, to vindicate his faith and to fix the sin of disobedience and heresy upon those who have changed the ordinances of the Gospel. “I have not troubled Israel, but thou and thy father’s house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord.” This was the sin of Ahab and his family. He and they had been guilty of other iniquities; but the sin which had provoked Jehovah to

scourge them and the whole kingdom with famine, was their having forsaken his precepts; and this is the sin which now causes God to be angry with his people, and to send upon them a sorer curse—a spiritual famine. This is the sin against which, at this day, we should cry aloud and spare not; and if the consequence be that there is controversy, the fault is not ours, it rests upon those who “have forsaken the commandments of the Lord.”

“The righteous is bold as a lion.” Far more than this. The Scriptures declare, not only that God “has not given us the spirit of fear,” but that he has given us “the spirit of power;” and in the termination of this interview between Ahab and Elijah we have a most remarkable illustration of the power with which God’s ministers are invested, when they are jealous only for Christ, and do not mistake their own selfish passions for zeal, as the apostles did when they pleaded the example of Elijah, and drew upon themselves that stern rebuke, “Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.” The king had sent through all his realm emissaries who were to drag the prophet to execution. Now he not only stands awed before the calm, earnest eyes which are settled upon him, but he finds himself spell-bound, and compelled by a mysterious influence to obey the voice which commands him to “send and gather all Israel unto Mount Carmel, and the prophets of Baal, four hundred and fifty, and the prophets of the grove four hundred which eat at Jezebel’s table.”

To this vast and august assembly let us now repair, that we may behold the glory of the Lord, and the awful interposition by which he vindicates his servant before all the people and overwhelms with contempt and destruction the pampered sycophants who—as the high priests of a profligate, though imposing idolatry—lorded it alike over the populace, the aristocracy, and the throne.

The scene is very sublime. Although the name Carmel belongs to a range of mountains, yet here, and generally in the Scriptures, it designates a lofty promontory, some fifteen hundred feet high, on the shores

of the Mediterranean Sea. So rich in fertility was this mountain, and so grand was the prospect on every side from its summit, that the imagination even of Isaiah could find no nobler image by which to portray the fuller glory of Christ's kingdom, than "the excellency of Carmel and of Sharon." Upon the commanding table-land on the top of Carmel are gathered the king, his princes, the prophets of Baal and all the people of Israel. Far away to the South stretches the once luxuriant plain of Sharon, now scorched and desolate. To the North and in the distance, Lebanon rears in pomp and majesty its azure peaks, now no longer decked with snow. While to the West, leaving the foot of the mountain, and spreading out to the horizon like a sea of glass sleep the blue waters, as if they too, were stagnant and withering under the torrid heat which parches all the land. The entire panorama—the purple haze, the sultry, dreary stillness, mountain, desert, hill, vale, headlands, waters—is eloquent of other days, and might well humble the nation in the dust as they contrast their past glory with their present degradation.

While such thoughts are perhaps passing in the minds of the multitude, and while they are enquiring the cause of this sudden proclamation, a man is seen ascending the eminence. He is alone and wears the simple habit of a pilgrim, but there is that in his look and bearing—a serene dignity and authority—which instantly stills the murmur of that immense audience, and inspires feelings of wonder, admiration, fear, as they gaze reverently upon him.

Looking at this magnificent spectacle, observe first, the prophet's expostulation with Israel. Occupying a lofty stand near an altar once erected to the true God and now broken down—a ruin hallowed by so many touching memories—he takes no notice of the king or of the priests of Baal who are incorrigible—but, turning to the people, he says, "How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him, but if Baal, then follow him." This was then the sin of Israel. The court and the prophets were decided in their idolatry; but the people still nourished some fear of the Lord,

while they served graven images. And if a preacher, with the spirit of Elijah, were now to visit this land, tell me, is not this the very sin which he would condemn? Half-heartedness; vacillation; serving God and mammon; devotion, hymns, prayers on the Sabbath and in the sanctuary, but souls utterly carnal during the week and in the world—is not this inconsistent, half and half religion the most conspicuous feature in our churches at this day? It is of this very spirit Jesus says, “I would thou wert either cold or hot.” Strange; for is not even lukewarmness better than utter worldliness? Understand what Jesus thus abhors. It is a professed devotion to him while the affections are devoted to the world. And this pretended respect is worse than the absence of all reverence; more sure to deceive our souls by hollow semblances and to injure the cause of Christ in the eyes of men. Nor upon any sin is conscience more severe than it is as to this mockery. It is said here that when Elijah uttered this expostulation, “the people answered him not a word.” And just so it is now. When God makes this charge, we have not a word to answer; our own consciences confirm it and we are like the man found among the king’s guests at the marriage supper who “was speechless,”—having not a word to say for himself and no one having a word to say for him.

And if this double-mindedness is common among the professed Israel of God, it is still more common among those, who, sitting under a faithful ministry, have, from their childhood, known the truth; who are awakened, convicted, almost persuaded to be Christians; but who still hesitate and lull their consciences by some fatal compromise; who, in fact, halt, not between two opinions, but between their most settled opinions and that conduct to which those opinions ought long since to have brought them. And now how glaring is this folly.—Such persons have not a word to answer, when we reason with them and press them to come to some determination upon a subject of such infinite importance. They know that Jesus requires them to follow him, that a choice is all which is left, that they will never be in a more favor-

able condition for making this choice, that not to decide is really to decide against God ; and yet they equivocate, they resist calls, warnings, instructions, entreaties, until God shall justly refuse them any further opportunity, until by his unalterable sentence he shall decide the case for them, and cause them to know the value of an interest in Christ when it is too late for them to secure it.

Returning to Carmel, you remember the challenge which—standing alone, but armed with celestial strength—the man of God openly gives to the whole college of Baal's prophets ; how, by acclamation, the people approve the appeal to sacrifice and fire ; and how vainly those prophets slay their victim, how they cry aloud to their god, and how, in the fury and phrensy of disappointment, they leap frantically upon their altar and lacerate their bodies as if to compel Baal to come to the rescue of his worshippers. Such was their god ; a miserable deity who hears them not, when they cry in their distress.

And such are all the idols to which the children of this world are constantly building altars and immolating their souls. Let them be put to the test. Let the hour of affliction, sickness, death approach, and what are they worth ? Vainly do their votaries then cry to them for help and consolation. They then confess the deceitfulness of their confidences, then, "their rock is not as our rock, our enemies themselves being judges."

While the priests of Baal were performing these orgies, we are told that Elijah "mocked them, and said, Cry aloud ; for he is a god ; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is on a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth and must be awakened." But do not misunderstand this conduct. Ridicule and sarcasm are not the proper weapons for a servant of God. There was reason in the prophet's irony ; it was a stern denunciation of the gross materialism of the pagan systems. In the mythology, not only of barbarians but of the most refined nations, the deities were really supposed to be confined to space, to eat, and sleep, and proceed on journeys.—It was about noon when Elijah thus taunted the priests, and his mocking only wrought into madness the violence of their incantations.

Discomfited, covered with dismay and confusion, the prophets of Baal abandoned their conjurations at the hour of the evening sacrifice—about three o'clock in the afternoon;—and it was now Elijah's turn. No effort of the imagination is required to make us feel what were the emotions of the spectators at this critical moment, or what suspense, anxiety, hope, fear, must have agitated the souls of Obadiah and of all those who still revered Jehovah in their hearts. If he shall succeed, then the truth will be vindicated, and the God of their fathers be again worshipped in Israel. But if he shall fail, the confidence, the consolation to which they secretly cling are gone, and the faith of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob is forever dishonored. Whatever apprehensions and misgivings may have palpitated in the bosoms and flushed the countenance of others, there were none in the soul of Elijah. The word *fail* was not in his vocabulary. Instead of being intimidated by difficulties, he multiplies them by causing his altar and sacrifice to be again and again drenched with water.

And what I have said of our prophet is always true of faith, which knows no such word as *failure*; which, linking our weakness to God's almightiness, welcomes difficulties, courts obstacles, and—with a confidence of victory which is victory—reposes exultingly in a Saviour who has always caused his glory to emerge from the thickest darkness, who will never disappoint our trust, but will vindicate his truth in the face of all his foes.

While the prophet is preparing his offering, and during his fervent supplications, every eye is riveted upon him; not a whisper is heard; the very air is mute with expectation. But not long does this suspense continue. Scarcely has the prayer ceased, when, streaming from heaven, dazzling the vision of that mighty concourse, a fiery flood rushes down upon the altar and devours the burnt sacrifice—consuming the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licking up the water that is in the trench. To this arbitrament all the people had appealed; and most awfully does Jehovah answer this appeal and assert his faithfulness. But what permanent influence did even such a phenomenon exert? It only

furnished another demonstration of the Saviour's declaration, that if the ordinary means of grace fail to convert men, no miracle will be effectual.

So conclusive, so appalling was this display of divine power and glory, that all were convinced, the altars of Baal were overthrown, the priests of a miserable superstition were destroyed, and the people, falling on their faces, exclaimed, "The Lord he is God, the Lord he is God." But how long did all this last? Such a vindication of the truth, such a direct awful manifestation—surely it will reclaim the people from their idolatry and reinstate the God of Israel in their affection and homage. No, even this interposition produces no lasting effect. Their seeming piety lacked one thing; and that one thing was the heart. Their devotions were the spasms of excited feelings; and spasms occur only in an unhealthy state of the system; and must be transient. The multitudes soon return to the city, to the court, to their old pursuits, their business, their cares, their pleasures. All the solemn vows on Carmel are forgotten, and their goodness evaporates as the morning cloud and as the early dew which passeth away.

II. It is sad enough, my brethren, to know that the influence of such a scene should have been thus transient upon the people. But scarcely do we begin to lament their relapse, when we are called to mourn over an object far more deplorable, I mean the defection of Elijah himself. What, indeed, is man? Can it be the same Peter that yesterday bravely exclaimed, "If I should die with thee, I will not deny thee in any wise," who now, with oaths and blasphemies, protests, "I know not this man of whom ye speak?" Is it the same Thomas that intrepidly summoned his fellow apostles with these words, "Let us also go that we may die with him," who now cravenly and recreantly abandons his faith and hope? Such inconsistencies in apostolic men astonish us; but I know no delinquency in a grand, heroic nature so mortifying as that betrayed in the flight and utter despondency of the prophet immediately after such glorious victories.

For my part, when I read the whole narrative, I feel that there never were so many causes combined to give illustration to God's faithfulness, and to consolidate a faith, a resolution absolutely immovable. What more could Jehovah have done for Elijah? Is he hungry? the birds of the air are made to cater for him. Do the poor widow's oil and meal fail? They are miraculously multiplied. Does his hostess mourn for her dead child? He is restored to life. Does the enraged tyrant pursue him? God himself conceals and protects him. Add to all this the commanding supremacy which domineers so grandly over the king, the august series of victories on Carmel; and now—fire having obeyed his voice, the heavens which, as a prince with God, he had turned into brass for three years, at his intercession loosen their treasures and pour refreshing torrents upon the earth. After all this can Elijah be afraid? Can he fear what man can do unto him? Alas, the disgraceful record is before us, and exhibits a weakness, a pusillanimity as dishonoring to God as it is dishonorable to him.

Had I time I would speak here of the influence of a wife over her husband. If it be for good, the apostle declares that she can win him when all other influences are despised. But if for evil, see the baleful consequences here. Ahab had been convinced, he was deeply moved and almost persuaded; but Jezebel dissipates all his good resolves, shames him out of them, and compels him to lend his power to her vindictive cruelty. It was before a woman's accusations that the boldness of Peter quailed; and now the lion-hearted Elijah is so terrified by the threats of a woman, that he flees for his life into the desert, and cries for death in a burst of bitterness and despondency. "And when he saw that, he arose and went for his life, and came to Beer-sheba which belongeth to Judah, and left his servant there. But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree. And he requested for himself that he might die; and said—It is enough; now O Lord, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers." What a change a few hours have wrought in this Tishbite! Look at the picture we

have before drawn of him ; and now look at this. Could any imagination have portrayed such a contrast ? Had Obadiah met him under that tree, he might well have exclaimed, " Art thou my lord Elijah ? " Nor let us only look ; the spectacle is full of instruction for us all.

" Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are ; " and we are men subject to the same passions and infirmities by which he was overcome. Let us, then, not be surprised if, at times, we sink into dejection and find our hearts cast down within us. In all his great characteristic traits, John the Baptist so strikingly resembled our prophet, that it was declared he should go forth " in the spirit and power of Elijah ; " yet in his lonely prison he finds his elasticity broken and his faith borne down for a season. We talk of faith ; and when it is in vigorous exercise, we may well exult in it as the sublimest element of human character. But whether the cause be physical, or moral, or intellectual—there can be no humiliation more deep and substantial than that of knowing by experience that mysterious changes come over us—sometimes most suddenly—and cause us to resemble the father who, " cried out and said with tears, Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief. "

In attempting to analyze the prophet's conduct and to account for the strange reaction in his experience, I think it is easy to see that one reason must be found in the mortification of his spiritual pride. Conscious of his high and heavenly credentials, inspired only by jealousy for God's honor, he had defied the king, shivered the idolatrous shrines, and stood before the people as the mighty vicegerent of Israel's God. But, as when Paul had been caught up into heaven, a sense of this glorious distinction tempted him to elation—so here, unconsciously, there insinuated itself into the mind of Elijah a sense of his own greatness, and he expects this greatness to be acknowledged by all. The king and his nobles will honor a ministry so irresistible ; at least all the people will flock to him and rejoice to do homage to a true prophet. Instead of this, the monarch and his satraps have left him and retired to their palaces, and the populace, whose acclamations had rent the air, prove

how fickle and hollow are their applauses. He finds himself seemingly left "alone" and exposed to the vengeance of an unrelenting woman whose queenly power, always imperial in that obsequious and licentious court, is now supreme, because her rage is seconded by the secret malignity of the pride and superstition which had been so publicly abased and exposed. He had anticipated the suffrage of the majority; but finding himself thus disappointed, his spirit sinks and his strength fails.

Let us learn wisdom from his folly. It is hard to work on for God where we are alone in the work. Conscious that we are maintaining Christ's truth, we become impatient and discouraged if that truth does not at once assert its majesty and win the multitude to the Lord's side. But when in this fallen planet, was the majority ever on the side of truth? The *majority!* Yes, the majority are on God's side. Ye angels and archangels, ye spirits of the just made perfect, ye cherubim and seraphim, ye are the "innumerable company," compared with whom all the gathered multitudes of this nation, of all kingdoms and nations are only as the small dust of the balance. But here, on this earth, prophets, apostles, the Saviour himself, still had to stretch out their hands to a wicked and gainsaying world. Let us not, then, be ever disheartened. It is for the trial of our faith, of our loyalty to Christ and his cause, that we are thus called to pray, and wrestle, and fight without human succor. It is that we may learn to say, "My soul, wait thou only upon God, for my expectation is from him." It is, that raising our thoughts above this earth, we may be "followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises;" that our eyes may catch the eyes of that cloud of witnesses who compass us about;—above all, that we may run with patience the race set before us, looking unto Jesus, who hath summoned us to engage for him, whose strength shall be made perfect in our weakness, and who will crown us with glory, honor, immortality, beyond the skies.

But it was not only the want of co-operation and success which caused this iron-souled herald thus suddenly to succumb. Elijah felt as if he was wholly without

sympathy; and this is the deepest, darkest, most crushing sense of lonesomeness. Strange as it may seem, it is, my brethren, not the less true, that—while gentler spirits will toil on, and suffer on uncomplainingly in the great battle of life—those who are most self-confident, who appear most independent of human approbation or censure, are the very persons who break down most unexpectedly and sink into utter despair when, in some dreadful conflict, there comes in bitterly upon them the consciousness which all, the strong and the feeble, must feel sooner or later, that the human spirit cannot live alone, nor suffer alone, nor fight alone. *He* “trod the wine-press alone.” But *He* was more than man.

I will add only one other remark—a remark which cannot too often be urged upon us all. It is that in his panic, Elijah abandoned God’s work, and thus unnerved all his strength and involved his soul in gloom and misery. “The joy of the Lord is your strength;” but strength is not for the supine, it is for those who are earnestly at work. In the world we see this connection between industry and a hopeful buoyant temper. No matter how poor they may be, how constant their labor, the most cheerful people—if not overtaken—are those who are strenuously plying their daily business. Among them you hear the laugh and the song. The melancholy, the dejected, the whining are the indolent. It is to these, though rich and prosperous, that life often seems to be only a blank, dreary waste, and death a door of escape.

And in the economy of grace this rule is still more universal. Here, in more senses than one, “faith without works is dead.” It is only while we are actively engaged for God—feeling that we live but when we are about our Father’s business, that all earthly aims are comparatively mean, that human interests, hopes, joys, affections, sorrows are passing away, but that earnest work done for God abides forever—it is only then that we are armed with a faith which quells every rising doubt, and that, by all the laws of God and our own spiritual existence, health comes from exercise, and difficulties and discouragements invigorate the powers and purposes of the soul.

As we contemplate the faith, the energy, the zeal, the majestic conflicts and triumphs of the prophet, we instinctively exclaim with Elisha, "Where is the Lord God of Elijah?" Why do we not witness the same spirit, the same glorious victories now? Souls are perishing around us, the truth is assailed and despised, the whole land is given to idolatry, and we are powerless. The means we employ are indeed of divine appointment, but how inefficient they prove and must forever prove without the divine agency. "Look down from heaven and behold from the habitation of thy holiness and of thy glory, where is thy zeal and thy strength, the sounding of thy bowels and of thy mercies? Are they restrained?" O, if Elijah's God would manifest his power, with what confidence and courage would we devote ourselves to the cause of truth, what grand results should we witness, what illustrious achievements would rejoice our hearts.

Let us remember that Elijah's God was with him only while he was occupied in noble and effectual services.—When thus engaged, he exulted in the conscious majesty of a life which had upon it the stamp and signature of a divine power. No sooner does he yield to discouragement and quit his arduous post, than he is shorn of strength and glory, and under a cowardly sense of weakness, cries out in anguish for death to relieve him from the forlorn life-struggle.

"And when he saw that, he arose and went for his life." "Saw *that*." Before, his look had been upward, exchanging glances with God, and seeing only the presence and faithfulness of Jehovah; now his eyes are upon the perils and discouragements around him. Guard your souls against these unbelieving fears. Look ever upward and your motto will be, "I have set the Lord always before me, because he is at my right hand I shall not be moved."

We are immortal until our work is done. While here, God means that we shall do and suffer and sacrifice for him; and never should that craven language be ours, "It is enough, now O Lord, take away my life;"—enough of temptation, enough of disappointment, enough of fears

within and fightings without, enough—too much of sorrow and darkness, and clouds and storms. No, no. It is not enough. Not enough *in* us; the work there is not yet as perfect as it must be. Not enough *for* us; God designs to show us still greater things, more of his power and faithfulness and love. Not enough *by* us; God has more work which he means us to do that his truth may be vindicated, and a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory be ours.

Elijah! ah, with too much reason—even when commemorating the mighty acts of this princeliest among the seers—does the apostle remind us, that “Elijah was a man subject to like passions as we are.” Let us cease from man, whose breath is in his nostrils, for wherein is he to be accounted of? and let us turn to Him who alone is worthy to be our example. If we must encounter enmity and persecution from men, let us “consider him who endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest we weary and faint in our minds.” If alone, without human succor or sympathy, we must bear the trial which not even those nearest to us can know; and endure the sorrow with which neither stranger nor friend intermeddled, and triumph in the strife which tempts us to yearn for a morrow that may set us free; let us consider him who said to those whom he so tenderly loved, “Ye shall leave me alone, and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me.” In a word, whatever the discouragement, the inward, central sinking of heart and soul, let us corroborate our energies by still “looking unto Jesus,” to him who—during all that wayworn pilgrimage which made him a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, and even in those mysterious hours when it pleased the Father to bruise and afflict and forsake him—never faltered in his faith, never shrank from duty, pain, danger, sacrifice; who longed indeed for death, but for the death of the cross; yearned, not for the moment when he should be released and a chariot of fire should waft him upwards to glory, but for that hour of sore and solitary agony when he should make “his soul an offering for sin,”—for the austere glory of that bloody baptism in

which he would finish the work of atonement upon earth, and emerging from which, he would ascend to live forever, our faithful Friend, our sympathizing High Priest, our all-prevailing Intercessor in heaven.



Sermon Seventeenth.

“LORD, TO WHOM SHALL WE GO?”

“SIMON PETER answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life, and we believe and are sure, that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.”—JOHN vi : 68, 69.

“TO whom shall we go?” The life of every man and woman is a search; and the inquiry in this text is the vernacular, though inarticulate cry of the human heart everywhere over this fallen earth. The many, with reversed aspirations, are ever bowing down to lying vanities, saying, “Who will shew us any good?” and the illusiveness of their restless pursuit after happiness has been the theme of moralists, philosophers, poets.—But there are who have found the true guide to rest and peace, (whom until it finds, the very freedom of the human spirit is a burden and bondage,) and they turn to Jesus, exclaiming, “Lord to whom shall we go but unto thee? thou hast the words of eternal life, and we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ the Son of the living God.”

Time was when cavillers loved to sharpen their wit upon a religion which ascribes so much to faith. Now, however, it is in this very peculiarity that profound thinkers discover the divine wisdom of the Gospel,—of a system which insists upon faith as essential to the true development of our nature. For life, as I have just remarked, is a search; but a search supposes faith in the thing sought. The student trimming his midnight

lamp; the poet burning with thick-coming inspirations; the artist patiently moulding the plastic marble; or kindling the eloquent canvass; the navigator battling with storms, and bending his harassed form, day after day, and night after night, over the prow of his ship as he peers into the distance for some glimpse of an undiscovered land;—all these, and all others who aim at noble achievements are men of faith; they believe in something beyond the realms of present knowledge, something to be revealed. In appealing to faith, therefore, the Gospel not only recognizes an element in our nature without which religion cannot exist at all, but, by consecrating that element, by proposing immortal happiness, it meets all the infinite capacity of our being, unfolding our minds, calling into full exercise our noblest powers, exalting, purifying, rejoicing the soul by hopes and assurances full of brightness and glory.

I. When Peter uttered the language of the text he spoke then, not only for himself and his fellow disciples, but for our common humanity. “Eternal life,”—this is the great truth which glowed in the apostle’s bosom; and this is the great want of our nature, a want the very consciousness of which is an assurance of man’s spirituality and immortality.

A moment’s reflection will make you feel that outward objects of loveliness affect us with pleasure, because there are types and tastes in our own hearts corresponding to them. And in the soul are capacities and yearnings, though dim, yet most real, which at once proclaim its native sympathy with the life and immortality revealed by the Gospel. In the very organization of our nature there are deep mysterious beliefs, hopes, longings after eternal life, which are wholly unintelligible without the Gospel.

Human ingenuity has constructed arguments to disprove the existence of matter; but that we think, will, compare, choose,—in short, that we are endowed with spiritual faculties,—this is a truth within our consciousness, which no one has ever denied. Should a philosopher attempt to assail this fact, it would be demonstrated

by the very power of the reasoning employed against it. Jesus never supposes that man can really doubt the existence of an immortal principle within him; he constantly and confidently addresses himself to our instinctive consciousness as to this point. And, now, when we look in upon the soul, we feel at once its immeasurable superiority to the body. The contrast is most striking between material forms,—so sluggish in themselves, so closely allied to earth—so speedily confounded with the common dust, and the magnificent, imperial intellect, soaring into eternity, triumphing when the body is prostrated by disease and dissolving in death.

In the soul, too, are the deepest sources of joy and wretchedness. And all these noble faculties,—these hopes and aspirations, these capacities for knowledge, purity, happiness, misery, are not, cannot be perfectly expanded in this life; they are plainly intended for another, an immortal existence.

The being of God is the first great truth folded up in our very constitution. Next to this is the immortality of the soul. When it is said, Jesus “hath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel,” it is not meant that a new truth has been revealed, but—in his own words—that he “bore witness to the truth,” that the voice within us has been rendered clear and authoritative by a voice from heaven, and that a doctrine which before had exerted little influence, now stands disclosed as the strongest motive to holiness, and as a source of unspeakable consolation. A man cannot help knowing that he is a rational being, because he is conscious of the exercise of reason; and just so the conviction of his immortality springs irresistibly from the instincts in his own bosom. This interior sense of a higher—an eternal existence is really more conclusive than the voice of an angel, yea, than the voice of God himself could be, if there were no such testimony in ourselves. Suppose such a declaration made to one of the brute creation, would it awaken any idea of a future life? could it possibly be comprehended? For my own part, when I find the Gospel so accurately adjusted to this inward

teaching, and the intimations in the soul responding so promptly to the Gospel, I rejoice in a certainty which nothing can shake, both of the truth of Christianity and of the spiritual, eternal life to which I am destined. And, now, if after death I am to enter upon such an existence, how infinitely important it is for me to obtain full information as to its character; whether it will be an immortality of sorrow or of joy; and by what preparation I may be rescued from that misery, and make that happiness mine.

And this irrepressible anticipation of an endless life is accompanied by another fact equally within our consciousness, from which it is impossible to escape, and which is fearfully portentous. Wherever humanity is diffused, there is also diffused a sense of sin and of exposure to the just penalty of transgression. If the tree, is known by its fruits, then man's conduct furnishes the most appalling testimony of man's depravity. Our nature is plainly not such as it must have come from the hand of its Maker, but is morally degraded, stained with guilt, and under the dominion of passions, appetites, habits, the main strength of which is in direct hostility to God's government. Philosophers overlook this radical disorder, and hence the utter worthlessness of their fine speculations about humanity. For this perversity of a depraved nature is a matter of painful experience. We are pressed not only by the remembrance of acts of sin, but by the consciousness of sin,—of sin itself, as a principle so pervading and powerful that the Holy Spirit calls it “*the law*” (that is, the *controlling force*) “of sin and death;” a law which reigns in every unrenewed heart, and which is unconquerable by any strength of ours. The slightest reflection on the malignity of sin must convince us, too, that, if God be just, holy, or true, it must be infinitely hateful to him, and he must punish it. Nor will the consequences of sin be exhausted here; we feel that they will go with us into eternity.

Unthinking cavillers sometimes urge man's sinfulness as a proof of his littleness, and, therefore, as an argument against the doctrine of his immortality; but the

reverse of this is the conclusion of sound reasoning. Man's sin is an evidence of his greatness ; for it is the result of his moral freedom. And his conscious guilt proclaims his immortality. It is an inward revelation and reverberation of those solemn announcements, " We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, to give account of the deeds done in the body." " It is appointed unto men once to die, and after that the judgment."

Looking at the words of Peter, we perceive, at once, that he speaks for those who have forfeited eternal life, and must find it, if at all, somewhere out of themselves. " To whom shall we go ?" We have it not in ourselves, and must go to some one who can give it back to us. And the consciousness of this loss haunts the human spirit, dimly it may be, but most ominously. The existence of God is, as I have said, an original truth found in the very structure of the soul. But the idea of God involves a belief in his moral perfections. Nor can any sophistry evade the conviction that between our character and his holiness, there is a contrast which severs us from all vital union with him, and that to be banished from him is spiritual death.

I will only add that this conscious estrangement from God must fill every thoughtful mind with concern and alarm, not only because it is an unnatural and horrible crime, but because, separated from its true centre, the soul is despoiled of all light and happiness, and abandoned to darkness and misery. We cannot retire within our own nature without feeling that our satisfying good must be found, not in ourselves, but in something out of us, in something congenial to our spirits, and capable of communicating purity and love and happiness to our souls. This something is God. He and he only can diffuse light into our minds, peace into our consciences, joy into our spirits. Our present and everlasting felicity must consist in the favor of that supreme spiritual Being who is the " Father of our spirits." To be alienated from him is to be cut off from the essential, original element of holiness and life. It is to be " dead in trespasses and sins " now ; and what a

prospect beyond the grave. To be in the world perpetually in contact with such a Being, entirely dependent upon him, and yet at enmity with him,—this thought is fearful. What, then, to go into eternity, and to be there alone with this mighty and awful Spirit, having no affinity with him but that of hatred, this will be eternal death, "everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord," a calamity which no finite power can comprehend, and at the bare possibility of which the mind becomes agitated, frightened, terrified.

II. You see, then, that Peter's inquiry is really the authentic language of our common humanity, a painful cry of the soul conscious of immortality, pressed by a sense of sin and bereavement, and yearning for a religion which meets these deep importunate necessities. I pass now to a second proposition suggested by the text, and affirm that until he comes to Jesus, man must find only a cruel mockery in all the systems which have been, or can be contrived to satisfy these wants. "This is life eternal that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." "I give unto them eternal life."—"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." "The gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Those who speak of natural religion as sufficient for man forget entirely the change which has taken place in man's condition. Whether in his normal state such a religion would have been adequate to his exigencies, I do not now enquire. It is certain that humanity is in an abnormal, unnatural state. It resembles a piece of machinery finished in exquisite perfection, but which has been so ruined by the shock of a fall, that the springs have lost all elasticity, the wheels will not revolve, or they turn with reversed and disastrous force. Nor can reason do anything to rectify defects so radical. The religion of nature may teach "the eternal power and Godhead" of Jehovah, but it knows nothing of that salvation for which the soul yearns. Hence the remark-

able fact that, without the religion of Jesus, all nations seek to appease their deities by sacrifices, but none are found to cherish toward them any sentiment of gratitude or love.

The question "To whom shall we go?" implies that substitutes for the Gospel may be proposed. The examination of these substitutes would conduct us into a very wide field; but it would be a waste of time to enter upon such an investigation. To man, as we have just described him, the matter is plainly reduced to a single alternative. For such a being, it is Christ or nothing; the Gospel or no religion at all.

Shut up this Volume. There, I have closed the Book. I put it aside thus. Let it remain there for a moment. We have no Bible open before us. And now I ask, by what light can reason and philosophy repair such a bereavement? "Eternal life" means, of course, something more than endless duration. In the Scriptures the import of that phrase is, everlasting glory and blessedness. But between guilty man and such a life there plainly is a great gulf fixed; and where can a child of Adam find a single ray of hope, while the great atonement by Jesus is unknown to him? Can sinners against God be saved at all? If so, how? Will the Supreme Being pardon sin? If so, how can forgiveness be reconciled with his justice? Salvation by our works is evidently a ruined scheme. If the divine mercy should raise guilty creatures to such glory at the expense of the divine righteousness, the whole economy of Justice would be demolished, and the moral governor of the universe would be only a weak, imbecile being, who suffers his laws to be dishonored, and rebellious creatures to triumph over him, to strip him of his prerogatives, and to force him to submit to the terms they dictate.

Besides, man is not only guilty but utterly corrupt. How can he be made holy? "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?" There is, too, a mutual alienation between God and man; how can this breach be healed? Must not the justice and holiness of God exclude these enemies from all intercourse with him? How then can they be exalted to the enjoyment of his

love, of an intercourse and communion intimate and eternal?

Anxiously, how anxiously—vainly, how vainly does the mind revolve these questions. Reason confesses that all is dark and portentous. Conscience returns an answer still more dreary. God alone can solve these problems. Will he ever solve them? Will he not convey some communication to man as to these subjects?

Even if the soul were mortal, would he leave so magnificent a spirit to live and die an utter stranger to the great original Spirit? But the soul is immortal; will he impart to it no information as to its everlasting destiny? Fallen, the soul is and guilty; yet how noble in its ruins, how earnestly pining for instruction as to its ruin and some method by which its purity and glory may be retrieved. O, that he would vouchsafe some answer, some message to these inner, central, imploring cries for light. For without direct intelligence from him, all the mind most passionately yearns to know must continue wrapped in impenetrable obscurity. “To whom shall we go?” Reason confesses that this knowledge is too lofty for her. The Height says, It is not in me; the Depth says, It is not in me. Nature, Philosophy, Science exclaim, What you seek is not in us, it is in God alone. And God is silent. “O, that I knew where I might find him, that I might come even to his seat.” But he conceals himself behind clouds and darkness. Though I call he will not answer, nor give ear to my supplications.

Such is man’s dismal condition while the Bible is shut. Well might John “weep much because no man was found worthy to open the book and loosen the seals thereof”—Now, open the Bible—that Volume which the Lamb that was slain has unsealed. *There*, I have spread its pages before you, and what heavenly radiance at once floods the soul and dissipates all the gloomy darkness in which it had been enveloped. No wonder that John saw all heaven in commotion and rapture at the unfolding of the glorious Gospel of the Son of God. “And they sang a new song, saying, Thou art worthy

to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood."

Silent!—no, my brethren, God is not silent. He has sent not only a message, but a messenger to teach us our future destiny; not only a messenger but a Saviour, and that Saviour his own Son. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." "I am the way, and the truth, and the life." Doubts, fears, perplexities are dispelled. "Thou hast the words of eternal life, and we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God;"—such was the triumphant assurance of Peter; and such is the exulting exclamation of all who know Jesus, in whom it pleases God to reveal this glorious Redeemer.

III. And this brings me to the last truth suggested by the language of our Apostle. I refer to the perfect confidence with which he reposes in the Saviour and in eternal life through him.

This full assurance we at once feel, is something higher than any intellectual perception at which we may arrive by arguments drawn from the Scripture doctrine of salvation by Christ alone. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him, but God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit."—These are the things of Christ. They are for "them that love God." But perception is not love. The senses have their proper province. The reason reaches conviction by logical deduction. The heart comprehends more clearly than the senses or the reason, when the objects belong to the affections; and the truths which cause the soul to repose with perfect delight in Jesus are the intuitions, the experiences of the heart. As we are sure that the sun shines because we see its radiance and feel its genial warmth, so the Gospel finds its authentication in the light and joy which it sheds into the renewed heart. Hear me upon this point.

There is, indeed, a sense in which the truths of revelation come to all with a self-evidencing power. "The

grace of God which bringeth salvation hath appeared unto all men.” “The true light lighteth every man that cometh into the world.” And such is this light that if a man does not see it, we can account for his blindness only by ascribing it to supernatural agency. “If our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.” I have already said that, without a revelation, the wisdom of man could never have originated the things which the Spirit of God teaches; but there may be a capacity to verify truths which we could not have discovered. Indeed in listening to any teacher, our profit will depend, not so much on what we receive, as what we bring. In the depths of our being there are voices waiting to be uttered, prophecies longing to be fulfilled, wants craving to be satisfied; and effective oratory moves us because it kindles all those trains of thought and feeling which slumbered in our own bosoms. The noblest effect of human speech is impossible unless the relations of the speaker and the audience be reciprocal, unless eloquent words find a response in eloquent hearts. A speaker captivates us because he interprets us to ourselves; not because he advances anything new, but because he unfolds truths which had long been hidden within us. We wanted faith in these truths and faith in our power to assert them; he makes them palpable to ourselves; his words find an echo in our own consciousness; we become identified with him; we feel as if his resistless arguments, his burning accents were our own, and we share the delights and triumphs of his eloquence. And, now, all this applies to the Gospel. Its truths revealed to us by the Spirit of God find a witness in our own spirits, even where they are not savingly received. “The word of faith which is preached is nigh us, even in our mouths and in our hearts.”

Take for example, the soul, its worth and glory. In the teachings of Jesus nothing is more prominent than the existence of this spiritual imperishable principle in

man ; and upon this subject his words find their attestation in every bosom. We said, in a former part of this discourse, that the soul and its immortality are original truths inscribed upon the very constitution of our nature ; and Jesus deals with them as such. He does not reason the matter, but appeals at once to the inner oracle, the responses of which come forth clearly at his bidding, and compel man to recognize his dignity and destiny. This inward light is more conclusive than any evidence of the senses as to outward objects, and it so authenticates the Saviour's doctrine as to put upon them the seal and stamp of infallibility.

It is just so, too, with regard to human guilt and responsibility. Jesus was the first teacher who proclaimed the divine estimate of sin. He alone could adequately comprehend this tremendous evil ; for he understood its malignity in itself, as contrasted with the holiness of God ; he knew the ravages it had wrought even in heaven ; and he saw its terrible consequences in the blackness of darkness, the weeping and wailing of devils and damned spirits. Man's guilt and exposure to wrath are however truths which have their testimony in our own consciences. We may refine and dispute about the origin and nature of sin ; but one fact survives and comes intact out of all our cavils and controversies ; this fact is that " we have all sinned." We may presume to reject the doctrine of human depravity ; but scarcely does the denial escape our lips, before we seek to retract it lest it should reach the ear of God. We carry the melancholy consciousness in our breasts. There linger in the soul mysterious memories of what it once was ; but they are memories of things long past, vestiges left by a terrible calamity which laid the soul in ruins.

This same harmony between the Scriptures and our own feelings we find with reference to God's alienation from man, and man's alienation from God. Multiplied as are the mercies hourly received from his hands, humanity everywhere confesses that sin has caused God to withdraw himself from it. Man is never found without a religion ; and every religion has repeated those earnest imploring cries, " Wherewith shall I come before

the Lord, and bow myself before the High God?” “Oh, that there were some daysman between us!”—Every religion known upon earth has been an attempt to appease an offended Deity. And while thus seeking to propitiate God, man has been conscious that he is himself unwilling to be reconciled to God. Conscience says to him, “Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you;” but he will not give up his sins. And, thus, he presents that phenomenon which the Bible portrays as something so monstrous and horrible. He feels a mysterious attraction drawing him to his Father; and yet hates that Father and shuns him.

And I might with equal confidence affirm that, wherever salvation by the Cross is proclaimed, the preacher may say, “By manifestation of the truth, we commend ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God.” There is such a wonderful correspondence between the disease and remedy, that—even where the truth is not savingly welcomed, reason confesses it is precisely adapted to all the felt emergencies of our mournful and helpless condition.

I was right then in asserting that the religion of Jesus has for every mind a self-evidencing power. The Gospel is its own witness, not only because its truths are transcendently above the human intellect, but because they find their verification deep in the human heart and conscience. As I have said, however, the exulting confidence with which Peter casts his soul upon this great propitiation and rests there for pardon and eternal life, is something more than any general conviction of the necessity of salvation through Jesus Christ. It is faith, saving faith; an assurance undoubting and absolute wrought by the Holy Spirit who relieves the awful mystery in which we are enveloped by revealing the Cross in us, and thus brings the renewed soul, amidst its conscious weakness and vileness, without one fear or doubt, with a recumbency ineffably delightful, to repose all its immortal hopes and interests upon Him who never will, never can disappoint its trust.

“Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life, and we believe and are sure, that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God,”—this is the language not only of a mind which is enlightened, but of a heart which loves. “He that believeth on the Son of God, hath the witness in himself;”—his confidence springs from experience. He can say, “I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day.” There has been a real, personal negotiation between him and his Saviour. Into the hands of no archangel would he confide the keeping of his soul; but he commits it with unwavering trust to a Being who promises to take good care of the deposit, and who will redeem his pledge;—a Being whom he knows, whom he cannot help knowing, for what has he not done for him? what has he not done in him? what is he not to him?

“We believe and are sure.” This faith, this assurance the Christian does possess as to the forgiveness of his sins. For with him pardon is not merely a doctrine, it is a fact, an inwrought experience. Upon such a point nothing less than absolute certainty can, or ought to satisfy us. Our everlasting destiny is at stake; and suspense, always distressing, is intolerable here. Let anything, and everything else be in jeopardy; let the title by which I hold all my earthly interests be called in question; let cruel doubts be cast over all my dearest earthly hopes, over all those tender affections in which my heart must live or have no life; but as to the forgiveness of my sins, I must have certainty. And in Jesus there is this certainty. “Blessed art thou Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven.” The joy of pardoned sin is shed abroad in the heart, not by any deductions of reasoning, but by the voice of God himself;—a voice “still and small,” but which at once hushes all the guilty clamors within, and diffuses unutterable peace in the soul.

Nor is the Christian only pardoned, he is reconciled to God; and of this he has the same delightful certainty. “The Spirit beareth witness with our spirits that we

are the children of God ; and if children then heirs ; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ.” No inferences will do as to such a question. Until it feels itself in sympathy with God, until the spirit of adoption cries, “ Abba Father,” the soul is unblessed and cannot be comforted. But it is comforted ; it is conscious of a new affection ; it has raised its eye to God ; glances have been exchanged between them ; the former enmity is expelled, and a sweet, endearing union has been established. The spiritual sense is as certain that “ the day has dawned, and the day-star arisen ” within, as the eye is that the morning discloses itself to our vision. “ Christ is formed in us the hope of glory.” There is communion with him, and with the Father and the Holy Spirit through him. And all this is a blessed reality. “ I believe and am sure ; ” “ I know, and am sure ; ” such is the language of the child of God. And his assurance is an unreasoned experience ; it springs up in him as waters break up from the earth. He never thinks of proofs, for he has the demonstration in himself. He rejoices in an experimental consciousness which admits of no doubt nor questioning.

I need not multiply details upon this article. When Peter made this confession, he spake what he knew, he testified what he had “ tasted of the good word of life ; ” and I trust his experience is that of many who now listen to me.

Christian, if indeed you are such, if you have passed from death unto life, you have received a crucified Saviour, you have beheld the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. Taught by God, you have felt how woefully deficient you have been from the standard of the law, how deeply involved in its curse and condemnation, and you have fled to Jesus who alone can give liberty and life to the soul. You have escaped from all legal terrors, by casting your burden upon him who hath delivered us from the curse of the law, himself bearing its penalty. “ Being justified by faith, you have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.” And having this hope, you are purifying yourself as Christ is pure. Advancing from

the spirit of bondage to the spirit of adoption, you have passed from a servile to a filial obedience; and gratitude, love, confidence, a sweet assurance, have grown up in your bosom. Once you were dead, but now you are alive. Once the God of this world blinded your mind, and the Gospel was hid from you; now the light of that glorious Gospel shines in your heart, and well may it be called "marvellous light,"—for it has couched all your blindness, so that now there is realized in you a whole Gospel, while—freed from the law of sin and death—you walk in the security of an imputed, and in the cheerful obedience of an imparted righteousness; and thus you are not only sure of eternal life, but feel that life already begun in your soul.

All this is to you not a speculation, but an experience; not only a religion in the Bible, but a religion in your own consciousness. You may be ignorant of the arguments by which the theologian proves that this interior light is not only possible, but most philosophical; nor do you care about such arguments; for you rejoice in this spiritual light. You can no more comprehend the processes of the Holy Spirit than you can the courses of the wind; but you feel his powerful influences. With the man born blind, you cannot explain how your eyes were opened; but this one thing you do know, that whereas you were blind, now you see. With Lazarus, you do not understand the mysterious power by which the voice of the Son of God poured life into the dead and putrefying fabric; but with him, you know that the vital energy did rouse and renovate you to newness of life.

Yes, my brethren, let the sceptic and the unregenerate ask, "How can these things be?" To seek to convince them is, of course, to talk to a blind man about colors, or to a deaf man about music. But the Christian—though illiterate and unable to answer the cavils of infidelity, or to marshal all the array of evidence behind which as an impregnable fortress revealed truth is intrenched—the Christian has the certainty of a personal, experimental knowledge as to these things. The sufferer relieved of pain is not a physician, he cannot explain the hidden working of the medicine; nor need he, in order to know

that the misery is assuaged. The man about to die of thirst cannot explain his thirst, nor as he quaffs the crystal beverage, can he analyze the element and account for the blessed effects; but he feels the refreshing tides which reinvigorate his parched frame. A fatal poison is coursing through the veins, consuming life in its sources. The antidote reaches the deadly distillment, and arrests its venom. Must the man be a chemist, to be conscious of the change wrought in his system by the renovating elixir? Suppose some learned philosopher, by logical deductions and nice trains of argument, should attempt to disabuse each of these men of his sensations, and to prove to each that he had never felt pain, and thirst, and the fiery bane in his pulses, or that he had never been relieved and refreshed and restored to health. Just as foolish are all the flippancies of cavillers, against the power of faith in a soul groaning under its guilt, and rejoicing in the experience of freedom, peace, eternal life. The believer in Jesus has the witness in himself; his credentials are independent of, and quite superior to all casuistry; he is conscious of a change which no power but that of God could have wrought. And this transformation was wrought by Jesus, by him who has the words of eternal life, whose is the gift of eternal life, who delivers the soul from death, breathes into it his own resurrection life, and crowns it with hopes full of immortality, with joys unspeakable and full of glory.

In conclusion, let me ask each of you, with individual reference, have you eternal life? Recollect, this is a matter within your own consciousness; for if you have not life in Christ now, you can have no life with Christ hereafter. “He that believeth in the Son of God hath the witness in himself.” Have you this witness in yourself? And by this I mean, not frames and meltings, but a solid reality of feeling. Have your crimson stains been made white in the blood of the Lamb? Have you the confidence that you are Christ’s, and Christ is yours forever, because you love him, and are therefore loved by him? Until you possess this assurance, it would be utter infatuation in you to be satisfied. Until Christ is formed in you the hope of glory, the Gospel has not

accomplished its sublime mission to you. This glorious consummation in the soul is the object of all our preaching. "This is the record, that God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son." "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish." Have you thus followed Jesus and received the earnest of everlasting blessedness from him? "He that hath the Son, hath life;" have you received the Son, and, with him, this glorious endowment? Each of us is either obeying the attractions of the Cross and casting anchor above, or yielding to the attractions of sin and sinking down to eternal death.

How is it with you? Are you seeking eternal life—this highest good to which we can aspire? How are you seeking it? By your own works, or by faith in Jesus? If by the law of works, you will perish. In other wrecks we may, out of the ruin itself, get some planks for a raft; but man is "LOST,"—life, heaven, hope, all are lost.—There is nothing left us except to cast ourselves upon him who came "to seek and to save that which is lost." "Eternal life is the gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

My impenitent hearers, can you calmly contemplate the prospect before you? "He that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." Does not the bare thought of such a doom fill you with consternation? The very purpose for which you have been reprieved so long is, that you may secure this celestial blessing. How many means, too, has God employed to persuade you to choose life and not death. "I will hedge up thy way with thorns;" has he not shut up, one after another, the paths in which you were pressing to destruction, casting up barrier after barrier, leaving open the narrow way of life, and throw-

ing about you the cords of his providence and grace to constrain you to enter there. Above all, his amazing love in that interposition by which such a boon may be yours. “ In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world that we might live through him.” Can it be that such love and mercy shall fail to move and draw you to Jesus ?

Christians, my beloved brethren, if this unspeakable gift were oftener the subject of our meditations, other things would sink into their proper insignificance ; we would ascend high above the passions which so often debase the souls of those who profess to be Christ’s. Peter’s assertion of loyalty and devotion was in answer to a very touching question. “ From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away ? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go ? thou hast the words of eternal life.” Our apostle was grieved, his whole soul recoiled at the very suggestion of forsaking his Redeemer. And I trust we share his pain and horror. *Go back* ;—back from eternal life, back to eternal death ! *Walk no more with him* ;—with him, to walk with whom in faith and love is my highest life now ; to walk with whom “ in white ” will be my noblest privilege in eternity. *Go away*. “ Will ye also go away ? ” “ Lord to whom shall we go ? ” To whom, when, baffled in heart and hope, we feel the vanity, emptiness, nothingness of all terrestrial objects ? To whom, when cares and troubles break like a deluge over our heads ? To whom, when, stung by disappointment and adversity, we experience the hollowness of mortal friendships and confidences ? To whom, when plucked and bruised by affliction, our eyes are laden with tears and our spirits burdened with anguish ? To whom, when our weakness is overborne by the tempter’s power, and a sense of our guilt and corruption bows us to the dust and fills us with dismay ? To whom, when cast down by gloom ? when wasted by sickness ? when life is ebbing away, and the earth receding from our vision ? Then, then, where can we turn ? whither can we fly ? what can reason,

philosophy, the whole world, the angels in heaven, do for us then? No, Redeemer of our souls, thou hast the words of eternal life; thou art eternal life and blessedness; thou art our only hope, portion, delight; and to thee we will cleave with ever deepening devotion, though the whole world, though a thousand worlds should tempt us to leave thee.

ETERNAL LIFE! My dearly beloved brethren, again and again ponder those words. What is the material universe compared with such a blessing? For my part, when I can escape the deadening influence of the world, and reflect upon the sublimity of this truth, my mind sinks under its weight, is dazzled by its brightness. Perfect knowledge, purity, love, happiness; and all this everlasting. A single doubt as to the perpetuity of this bliss would throw a pall over heaven itself; but no such fear shall disturb our glorified spirits. Those crowns can never wither; those harps can never be broken; the friendships formed with angels and saints in light will never be interrupted; the delicious intimacies with Jesus, the beatific visions of the Father shall forever fill our souls with unutterable felicity. I repeat it, when I feel my meanness and vileness, all this seems too much for man. But when I turn to the Cross, I feel that nothing is too much for man. I rejoice in the certainty of immortal life and glory for those who are Christ's. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him, also freely give us all things?"

My friends, Jesus offers this life to each of us. He says, "I am come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly." But remember, it is offered, and with you it rests to choose or reject it. "Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life,"—such is the Saviour's complaint as to too many of you. If you do not come to Jesus, if you are not united to him now by faith, love, harmony of spirit and purpose, you have no life in you, you can never enter heaven; or, if borne there, you could no more participate in its joys, than a corpse carried into a palace can regale itself with the illumination, the banquet, the ravishing strains of music, and

all the splendors of princely festival. Enter into these truths. When his neighbors, friends, family all came out of the City of Destruction, entreating Bunyan's Pilgrim to return, he “ put his fingers in his ears and ran, crying, Life, Life, Eternal Life ! ” Let us imitate him. Let us prize above all price a good which turns into contempt everything the earth can offer. It is placed by God within your reach ; count all things but dross and filth that you may win it.

God grant that these thoughts may affect, constrain, compel us all. “ O man of God, fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called. ” With this object before our aspirations, may we spurn every solicitation which seeks to seduce us from Jesus. When tempted to be faithless to him, his truth, his cause ; and when others are forsaking him ; then may we see those eyes which sought Peter turning upon us ; then may we hear that voice which pierced the heart of Peter appealing to us, saying, “ Will ye also go away ? ” And then may our inmost souls—abhorring the thought of such perfidy—stung, wounded by the very question—with the tender resentments of a love and truth which cannot bear to be suspected—then may our inmost souls reply, “ Lord, to whom shall we go ? thou hast the words of eternal life, and we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God. ”

Sermon Eighteenth.

A PRECIOUS SAVIOUR.

“To you that believe he is precious.”—I PETER ii: 7.

WE this day commemorate the sufferings of the Redeemer. All the services of this Sabbath say to us, “Behold the Man!” And what occurred when Pilate uttered that remarkable exclamation is virtually repeated now.

You recollect that, after having pleaded in vain for Jesus, the Roman governor retired from the judgment hall and delivered him to the soldiers, who “plaited a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and put on him a purple robe, and said, Hail King of the Jews, and smote him with the palms of their hands.” After this, Pilate again returned to the hall where the people were waiting, and with him came Jesus arrayed in the insignia of barbarous mockery, his face stained with blood, but filled with heavenly calmness and majesty.

When we remember his life of unwearied benevolence, it seems impossible that the hearts of the multitude should not be moved with sympathy, that they should not seek to interpose and deliver him. But they cried out, “Away with him, Crucify him,” and demanded that a vile malefactor should be discharged, saying, “Not this man, but Barabbas.” Among them, however, were some who viewed the spectacle with amazement and horror; whose hearts melted and whose eyes streamed with tears; some who followed him weeping and lamenting, even to the last scene of the dismal tragedy.

And all this is virtually renewed to-day and in this sanctuary. How often, how earnestly have we pleaded with many of you for this adorable sufferer, but pleaded in vain. Even now—when he not only stands before you bruised for your sins, wearing those cruel ornaments, smitten and afflicted—but when he is “evidently set forth crucified among you,” he finds no love and sympathy in your bosoms. It is nothing to you that there never was sorrow like to his sorrow; and your pride, your lusts, some wretched passion which robs you of your souls is preferred before him. Until Jesus is seen by faith, men discern in him “no form nor comeliness;” he is despised and rejected, hated for his holiness, and his claims repelled in hardness and contumely.

But when it “pleases God to reveal his Son in us,” when the Holy Spirit “takes of his and shews it unto us,” what a change. He is then, indeed, “the chiefest among ten thousand, and altogether lovely.” Yes, if a blind world derides him and crucifies him afresh, there are those to whom he is fairer than the sons of men, and unspeakably precious. If to glory in the cross we have to be crucified to the world, there are those who welcome the cross as infinitely dearer to them than all the wealth and glory of ten thousand worlds. And it is to these the language of our text is addressed.

I. There is one class, and only one, to whom Jesus is precious; and who are these? “You that believe.”—Every day you are asking us how you may know whether you have saving faith. Well, behold the criterion. You need not go up into heaven for raptures and ecstasies. You need not descend into hell for convictions and terrors. The answer is in your own consciousness. Is Jesus precious to you?

Is honey sweet to your taste? Is light pleasant to your eyes? Your wealth, your children, are these dear to your heart? You can at once solve these problems; and you can as instantly decide whether Jesus has a place in your affections. If you believe, he is precious to you. And the converse is equally certain. If he is not precious to you, you do not believe. Through the influence of

education, or association, men may grow up with much respect for the Bible and the name of Jesus, but they have no real appreciation of him until their hearts are changed, until they apprehend him by faith. To you "that believe" he is precious.

Now, as to the exercise which the Scriptures call "faith," I remark that it is not an abstract, speculative assent to the truths of the Gospel, but a full, cordial, controlling persuasion of all the Bible reveals with reference to our sins and to Jesus as the Saviour from sin. It is a clear, realizing, delightful view of the things thus disclosed; a hearty committing our souls, with all their interests, into his hands. Faith is the act not only of the understanding, but of the heart; an act by which Christ is received as God's first, chief gift, and everything is renounced which stands in competition with him. Receiving Christ is synonymous with believing in him.— "To as many as *received him*, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that *believe in his name*." This faith Peter styles "precious faith," because it reveals a precious Redeemer. And he declares that it is "much more precious than gold," because in appropriating the Saviour, it enriches us with unsearchable treasures of grace and glory.

The term in our text which is translated "precious" denotes the highest esteem; it is in this sense equivalent to the words elsewhere rendered "glorying in the cross;" and faith alone thus honors and exalts the Redeemer; for faith alone has eyes to take in his glories, and to appreciate his surpassing dignity. Men may pronounce noble eulogiums upon his virtues and doctrines, his godlike life and death; but until "God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ," all is dark as to any realizing sense of his divine majesty. The glory of his person and the glory of his cross are "things of the Spirit of God," which "the natural man receiveth not," neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

But the text imports more than reverence; the adjective here is a term of endearment, and in this import the

expression is full of beauty. All very deep feelings defy language. As soon as we attempt to utter them, we become abrupt and incoherent. And of this we have a striking illustration in the passage before us. Literally it reads thus, "*To you who believe—preciousness.*" No one is designated. The apostle simply says, If you believe there is one object unspeakably dear to you, and you know instinctively who that object is; and, as God is not only lovely, but love itself, so this adorable Being is to you not only precious, but the essential, infinite preciousness itself.

Truly is the light of faith called "marvellous light;" for it gives sight to the blind. A blind man may turn his seared eyeballs forever to the orb of day, he can see nothing; but, revealed by the Spirit, the Son of Righteousness sheds healing upon the blurred vision of the soul, and pours celestial radiance into the darkened mind. As when we behold a natural object, its image is pencilled upon the retina of the eye, so, when seen through the medium of faith, "Jesus is formed in us." And when he is thus seen and known, love for him at once becomes the ruling sentiment. It is the very attribute of such a passion, that it concentrates all the thoughts and affections upon a single object. The miser, the vindictive man, the voluptuary, each regards everything in the light of a single absorbing lust. And to the believer "Christ is all and in all." He "is all;"—all his trust, all his resource, all his salvation. And he is "in all;"—in prayer, all his plea; in duties, all his energy; in poverty, his wealth; in affliction, his comfort; in sickness, his health; in his anticipations of heaven, the Being whose presence will forever fill the golden atmosphere with songs of rapture, and without whom those bright abodes would be only a scene of sadness and irksome magnificence.

To those who believe he is precious. They alone feel their guilt and corruption, the absolute necessity of a great atonement and the infusion of a holy nature by this Saviour. And they are conscious of something more. Even after pardon and the transfusion of a new principle of spiritual life, the Christian has to mourn

over daily imperfections; and, at times, sin—though it cannot have dominion—breaks out with such alarming mutiny that he is kept low and abhors himself before God. He feels, therefore, the necessity of a righteousness not only imparted, but imputed;—a righteousness other than his own, if he is to stand perfect before inflexible Justice. Others are blinded, but he sees clearly that God must love us, or we are forever lost; that if God loves us, he must love our persons, not our characters; and that, therefore, he must love us in Christ, clothed in his righteousness. And this view fills the heart with peace, gratitude, assurance, as the believer exclaims, “I am found in him, not having mine own righteousness which is by the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.”

Believers alone behold the glory of Christ, “the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” “Faith is the substance of things hoped for;” and Christ is the crowning glory of all the glorious hopes of the Gospel. And faith receives him not as an ideal, but a real Christ; not Christ in history, but Christ in the soul, reigning there in ineffable majesty and love.—In short, it is only to believers that Jesus is so experimentally known that they can say, “Whom having not seen we love, in whom, though we see him not, yet believing we rejoice, with joy unspeakable and full of glory.” They and only they experience the efficacy of his blood, calming the wounded spirit. They, and only they have heard his voice hushing the cries of a guilty conscience. They have felt his attractions, tasted his grace, rejoiced in his love. At what time their hearts were overwhelmed within them, they were led to the Rock higher than they; higher than all their sins and fears. Afflicted and tossed with storms, they have leaned upon him; and heavenly peace has breathed into their souls. Fainting under the heat and burden of the day, they have sat down under his shadow with great delight. He has been and is to them, as “a hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest, as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.” They hold sweet communion with him. And, gathering into

one aggregate all earthly charms, they can trample them under foot, and exclaim, Whom have we in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that we desire besides thee.

II. "To you that believe he is precious." Having seen to whom Jesus is thus dear, let us now pass to our remaining, our principal topic, and enquire, why, in what aspects, for what qualities, he is thus precious. Does a blind world ask, "What is thy beloved more than another beloved?" how many answers at once rise up in the Christian's bosom, so that he knows not where to begin, and sees not where he can end!

In the first place, Jesus is precious to those who believe because, lost and ruined as we are, he is the great adorable deliverer. The original grandeur of humanity is seen in its ruins. Such a moral wreck, so vast and stupendous, could have befallen none but a most noble being. We discover everywhere, above and beneath the earth, convincing proofs of some overwhelming physical convulsion; and we find in human nature evidences quite as conclusive of some far off but tremendous spiritual catastrophe. It is idle to speculate about the entrance of sin into the world and the existence of depravity. The fact is before us; it is a matter of consciousness; and all the philosophizing in the world leaves the theological difficulties just where it found them. When I read that "*By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin,*" I accept the statement—just as the inspired apostle received it—as a matter of pure revelation. I perceive clearly that this doctrine explains much in the present economy, which otherwise would be oppressively painful and utterly irreconcilable with the benevolence of God,—(the sufferings and death of infants, for example)—but the doctrine itself I cannot explain. I feel and confess its mysteriousness; but when it comes to me upon "the testimony of God," my faith at once believes it.

The Scriptures derive the human family from a common parentage; and we acquiesce in this account of the creation, although science is entirely baffled in all attempts to detect the causes which have produced such

national diversities of color and character. Suppose that in your garden there were a tree bearing delicious fruit, and diffusing balmy perfumes. Suppose some pestilential sirocco were to sweep over this tree, and so poison all its sap that its fruit should become bitter and its odors most offensive. Suppose that this deterioration should be clearly proved by your own senses. You would not hesitate to believe the fact, though the hidden process by which this blight had been infused might be utterly inexplicable to you. Well, now, the testimony of God is surely more conclusive than the evidence of our senses; and he declares that "By one man sin entered into the world." The first man came pure and righteous from the hands of his Maker; but he yielded to temptation; and transgression was not only a crime but a crisis, changing not only his condition but his nature. And, as like begets like, this taint descends to his posterity.

Such is the simple announcement, and I receive it upon God's authority. I cannot explain it; but no honest man can deny the depravity thus affirmed. That the moral degeneracy adheres to our common humanity, is a truth whose demonstration meets us on every side.—When it is found that "all flesh hath corrupted his way on the earth;" when, amidst the perplexity and confusion of scholastic discussions, the fact that "all have sinned" still survives and defies the ingenuity of logic; when, in every age and in every nation, every human being is found living in disorder and violating God's law; when, no matter what may be the differences in hue, or civilization, or manners, every child of Adam carries the virus of corruption in his nature;—why, the argument is forever settled. This dismal phenomenon proclaims the deterioration of the whole race. Sin is not an accident; it cannot be ascribed to any individual perversity, nor to education, nor to the air we breathe, nor the food we eat; it infects humanity. The fountain may be inaccessible; but we know by the streams issuing from it, whether it is sweet or bitter. So we cannot penetrate the human heart; but we know what is there when we see what "proceeds out of it."

If, however, the doctrine of original sin be true; if, without ever having been consulted, man thus inherits a fallen nature, can he be held responsible for his conduct? Here is another intricacy into which vain reasoning seeks to involve us; but out of which our own unerring moral instincts easily rescue us. For, if in our consciousness the truth remains intact, that we are under captivity to evil dispositions, there is there also this other truth, equally invincible, that for indulging these dispositions we are guilty before God. To bring the matter home to your moral judgment, let me ask you a question. Suppose a fellow being commits murder, suppose he murders one who is dear to you, and suppose he pleads as an excuse that he only obeyed the propensity of his heart, would you hold him innocent? Would not his very plea fill you with abhorrence, and draw upon him the execration of mankind? A necessity which forces a man against his will acquits him, of course, of all guilt; but if one yields freely to his corrupt inclinations, no sophistry can intercept the sentence we instinctively pronounce, and which he pronounces irresistibly against himself. As to the ulterior question of the influence which originated the will, philosophy may amuse itself with subtile questions; but such abstruse speculations avail nothing. In the philosopher, as in the peasant, conscience will entertain no such abstractions. Let an evil act be perpetrated from an evil intention, and the verdict we pass upon others, and the feeling of guilt and responsibility in our own bosoms, follow inevitably and by necessity.

You complain, my friend, that a depraved nature cleaves to you. Now, are you sincere? If so, then this moral malady is a grief and a burden under which you groan, and from which you earnestly long to be delivered. Well, do you really feel thus? No. You love these depraved propensities; you take pleasure in indulging these passions; you would not wish to be without those constitutional impulses whose gratification is so agreeable; you reject the remedy which is freely proffered;—how unjust, then, are the charges you prefer against God.

The fact is that, until convinced of sin by the Spirit, a man has no conception of its deep-seated infection. He

regards it as an accidental outbreak, a violence to his better nature; and, one day, by strenuous resolutions he means to conquer it. But let him be brought to realize the fearful truth that, ingrained in his very constitution there is an inveterate corruption which pervades all the recesses of his being, baffling all human power, and with what imploring energy will he utter that wail, "Oh, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" And when the grace of God that bringeth salvation is disclosed to him, with what surprise and delight does he exclaim, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Instead of complaining that God holds him guilty for a depraved heart, he himself sees this to be the desperate thing in his condition, that his very nature, his very will are corrupt. Reflecting intently upon the malignity of sin; perceiving clearly that, if there be truth in God, he must punish it; he is lost in wonder and gratitude while he accepts a pardon which forever cancels his sin, and yet forever records God's righteous judgment upon that sin. Instead of impeaching God for having allowed corruption to be entailed upon him, he admires the wisdom and love which tell him that he must be "born again of the Spirit," and provide for a renovation as radical as the disease. And as from a knowledge of deliverance he comes to behold the deliverer, and to comprehend that from all this hopelessness and terror he is saved through the sore agony of the only begotten Son of the Father,—his whole soul is at once captivated, the contemplation of such mercy sweeps the mind alternately with love, rapture and adoration.

How precious, now, is Jesus, and salvation through Jesus! Yes, my own experience tells me that I have inherited depraved propensities; my moral sense convicts me of guilt for complying with these propensities; but what then? Receiving the Gospel, I rejoice that all this is true. Referring to the death of Lazarus, and knowing that his resurrection would awaken a nobler joy than could have been felt had he not died, Jesus said, "Lazarus is dead, and I am glad for your sakes that I was not there." And so I am glad that I died in Adam, that I might live in Christ. I am glad that a degenerate

ruined nature has been entailed upon me, since it is only by this inheritance that I became interested in the blood and righteousness of the Redeemer. Had the first Adam never apostatized, I could have stood only in my own strength, I could at best have enjoyed only the reward of a human obedience. Now I am sustained by almighty strength, I share the glory of a divine obedience. I am glad that by nature I was a child of wrath, that by grace I might be a child of God; and if a child, an heir, an heir of God, and joint heir with Jesus Christ.

To them that believe, Jesus is precious, in the next place, because the knowledge of him is transcendently glorious, transforming, rejoicing to the soul. The believer can say, "I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.

Here is knowledge which imparts spiritual life to those who were dead in sin; and infuses the love of holiness, yea, holiness itself, into their souls, changing them gradually into the likeness of God. "We all, with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." As one glimpse of the brazen serpent arrested the deadly venom coursing through the blood of the poisoned Israelite, and poured health into his veins, so one direct look at Jesus will do more to purify the soul than the knowledge of all truths and mysteries, than all prayer, vigilance, fasting, than the most faithful use of all the means of grace. If we have "escaped the pollutions of the world," it has been "through the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." And if we are to "grow in grace," it must be by growing "in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." One clear, open view of Jesus!—and all the temptations of earth and hell are dispelled as darkness before the rising sun.

Here is knowledge which is truly humbling. The Christian loves to lie low in the dust, forgetting himself, losing all thought of his own interests, swallowed up in the delightful contemplation of God's happiness and glory; and it is as he looks upon the face of Jesus, that he is thus humbled under the consciousness of his own

vileness, and of the free distinguishing mercy he has obtained. All the fires and thunders of Sinai, all the terrors of hell have no power to abase the soul in real self-abhorrence. It is in view of a crucified Redeemer, that all self-conceit, all concern about human distinctions, and even all spiritual pride—that most insidious and detestable form of vanity—die out within us. And, as I said, this self-annihilation, as we gaze upon him whose sovereign grace has chosen, pardoned, justified, sanctified, and saved us, fills the believer with silent but ineffable joy. Never did Job know such humility and such peace as when he exclaimed, “I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee; wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes.” The storm, earthquake, fire left Elijah still haughty and querulous, in unrest and mutiny. It was when the “still, small voice” (the emblem of incarnate Gentleness and Love) fell upon his ear, that his spirit was hushed in adoration, and he wrapped his blushing but serene face in his mantle.—In a word, the redeemed in glory know nothing sweeter than the bliss which satiates all their souls, as they gaze upon the Lamb, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, “Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power,” and then cast themselves down and wonder, love and worship.

While thus humbling, the knowledge of Jesus is of all things the most exalting. Other “knowledge puffeth up.” There is no such vain elation, as we stand before the amazing majesty and glory of the Cross; but there is a conscious holy elevation of the soul, so that all earthly honor is felt to be poor and contemptible. The believer is “lifted up” with Jesus. He “glories” in him. He exclaims, “God who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he hath loved us, even when we were dead in sin, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved,) and hath raised us up together, and made us to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.”—All his aspirations are sublimed. He exults in life and immortality, not only anticipated but realized. He triumphs as in his own experience he comprehends something of the meaning of those words, “The glory which thou gavest me, I have given them.”

In short, this knowledge frees not only from punishment but from guilt. It sheds perfect tranquillity into the conscience. It communicates a happiness substantial and satisfying. Under its blessed influence faith and hope bloom and ripen into full assurance. At first these graces were too dependent upon feeling; and they were therefore, weak and inconstant. As we "know him and the power of his resurrection," confidence increases with light; faith looks upon divine justice with an eye as steady as it does upon mercy; hope smiles at storms and billows as it feels its anchorage upon the Rock of Ages; the believer has, can have no more doubt than if he were already in heaven. Though conscious of his unworthiness, he is not afraid to exclaim, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? it is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth? it is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us;" he rejoices "with joy unspeakable and full of glory;" he not only is certain that nothing can separate him from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus his Lord, but he tastes the earnest of the purchased possession; he not only knows that he shall hereafter come, but now, in sympathy, in communion, he is already "come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling which speaketh better things than the blood of Abel."

To those who believe Jesus is precious because he is "Emmanuel, God with us," "God manifest in the flesh,"—and so manifested, in a form so wonderful, tender, winning, that the heart gives way, and loves, admires, adores.

As his death drew near, Dr. Griffin remarked, "Latterly I have been specially praying for faith in Christ. I see that I have too much confined my thoughts to God, and that I ought to go directly to the Saviour's arms, and that I ought to believe, abominable as my sins have been, if they have once been pardoned, they form no par-

tition between me and the heart of Christ." When Philip exclaimed, "Lord, shew us the Father and it sufficeth us," Jesus said unto him, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father." My brethren, this prayer of Philip is really the earnest imploring cry which the soul incessantly utters; it cries out for God, for the living God. The whole universe is too poor for its boundless capacities; and it is only in Jesus that this deepest, most essential want can be satisfied. Moses supplicated God that the same blessing might be vouchsafed to him; "I beseech thee, shew me thy glory;" and you remember the answer. "Thou canst not see my face and live, but I will make my goodness to pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord." That name was JESUS; for, "the Lord passed before him and proclaimed the Lord, the Lord God merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty." A God merciful without clearing the guilty!

This is the mystery of eternity which is now revealed in the Gospel. Here the divine glory shines in its noblest effulgence. Its unchastened splendor would wither and destroy us. In Jesus its lustre is seen through a transparency and softened; but how surpassing the thought of man or angel. Justice awfully asserted, and yet the transgressor *justified*—not only acquitted, but accounted perfectly righteous. Mercy reaching the vilest and the guiltiest; yet so exercised, that hell itself cannot as fearfully proclaim God's abhorrence of sin, and his inflexible determination to punish it. Wisdom which not only rescues the divine character from any imputation on account of the entrance of sin, but causes that catastrophe to shed over it a glory otherwise impossible; for in his substitute the sinner now renders to the law an obedience beyond the reach of unfallen man or unfallen angel—an obedience which magnifies the law and makes it honorable. Lastly, Love which humbles man in the very dust, yet raises him to a higher destiny than he could ever have imagined, had he never sinned; to a glory above that of

unfallen angels; exalts him to a share in the glory which shall forever crown the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords.

I had intended to dwell upon other aspects in which Jesus is precious to those who believe, but I have not time. I have said enough to illustrate the assertion of the apostle, that Jesus is not only precious, but preciousness itself. The riches of Christ are unsearchable riches "of grace and glory;" and if we believe, those riches are indefeasibly ours. When it pleased God, said Paul, to reveal his Son in me, I conferred no longer with flesh and blood, I was crucified to the world, and the whole world was crucified to me. And with reason; for within the circle of his thoughts and affections a new Being, eclipsing all other objects, then appeared and became the centre of resistless charms and glories.

A Being precious in himself;—his majesty, his condescension, his love, his suitableness to all the soul can need for time and eternity investing him with peerless attractions.

A Being precious in his mediatorial offices. A prophet, to enlighten our ignorance; a priest, offering himself upon the dreadful altar; a king, subduing the inveterate corruptions in the heart and establishing there an empire which is "righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost;" a friend at court ever living to make intercession for us;—we cannot contemplate him in these characters without feeling that he is inestimably dear.

A Being precious in all the relations he sustains to his people. Do I find earthly friendships hollow? he is "a friend that sticketh closer than a brother." Am I called bitterly to experience the fickleness of the sincerest human affections? he loves "with an everlasting love," "having loved his own he loves them even unto the end." He loves their persons, and his devotion does not change because they sin against him. How vile was the conduct of the apostles, but he does not cast them off; he still says, "Go tell *my brethren*, and *Peter*"—Peter, who denied him with an oath. Does my bleeding heart mourn over its hidden plagues which mock to scorn all human skill and experience? he is the tender unfailing physician.—

Am I surrounded by enemies powerful and malignant? he is the ally who makes me more than conqueror. Am I a poor, erring, helpless sheep? "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he leadeth me beside the still waters; he restoreth my soul; he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake."

Yes, to those that believe, Jesus is precious in all his relations to them. And he is precious for all the blessings secured to them by his sufferings. His tears flowed that all tears might be wiped away from our eyes. His blood cleanseth us from all sin. Horror seizes us as the soldiers scourge and beat that sacred form; but it is "by his stripes we are healed." We cover our faces as he walks forth dressed in the decorations of a blasphemous derision; but not all the robes of light could have decked him in such royalty as that with which he is invested by this impious purple; his celestial diadem proclaimed no majesty like that with which the cruel garland upon his head now crowns him; the reed in his hand is the sceptre of a power more imperial than that which created material worlds. And this majesty and omnipotence are all engaged for us. Because he humbled himself, he is now exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, to bestow blessings which as God (I speak it reverently) he could not have conferred, and which are now shed down freely and richly upon his people.

He is precious for the consolation he gives us in assuming our nature and bearing it to heaven. When I see the brightness of the Father's glory stooping to earth, taking humanity into such mysterious union, and then exalting it to the very throne of the celestial glory, I am filled with hopes, assurances, anticipations which struggle in vain for utterance. I would not barter the lightest coronet which the humblest of the redeemed shall wear for the massiest crown that coruscates upon the brow of an archangel.

I will only add that, precious as Jesus is at all times, he is especially precious when all precious earthly things become poor and worthless. When the soul is bowed down beneath a load of sin, then he says, "Look unto

me and be lightened." When it is plucked and crushed by affliction, then he draws nigh and whispers, "I will not break the bruised reed." "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." When gloomy forebodings overwhelm us, how sweet to rest upon his bosom who declares that he "will never leave us nor forsake us." When pressed by sore temptations, how strengthening to fly to him who, having been tempted in all points as we are, knows how to succor them that are tempted. In the last trying hour, amidst the unavailing tears of friends and family, his sympathy can reach and sustain us. And he can accompany us into the dark valley, changing its glooms into heavenly light and music, filling our pale lips with songs of triumph and rapture.

"To you that believe he is precious." *Supremely precious.* "Lovest thou me more than these? Lord thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee;"—that I love thee, with all the infinite powers of my heart, that thou art throned over every thought and affection of my being. *Increasingly precious.* Other objects lose their charms by familiarity; but the more we know of Jesus, the more do we feel that his name is "Wonderful," that in him dwells all fullness of heavenly excellence, of adaptation to our wants, of grace,—that "in him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." *Eternally precious.* When first his loveliness dawned upon our eyes it diffused new charms over everything; the earth, the sky, the trees, the flowers, all shone in surpassing beauty. When all mortal things shall be fading from our vision, his loveliness shall stand disclosed in its immortal lustre. And while the ages of eternity roll on, it will still be flooding our souls with fresh transports, as, with the redeemed in glory, we fall at his feet, saying, "Unto him that hath loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto our God and the Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen."

And now, my brethren, in drawing these thoughts to a conclusion, let me ask, what ought to be their practical improvement?

Certainly, if I have had your attention, you have anticipated one use of these truths; you are prepared instinctively to obey the exhortation which calls us to be ever "looking unto Jesus." We have been speaking of faith. When the apostle uttered that exhortation, he had just been illustrating the power of grace by the most splendid examples. But after proposing this "cloud" of heroes, he bids us fix our gaze, not on the cloud, but on the sun to whose radiance the cloud owes all its glory. As he celebrates the triumphs of these saints and martyrs, our hearts burn within us; yet, says he, these are but men like yourselves; if you would run the race set before you, look not to them, but to Jesus. The language means, "Look away to Jesus;" and holy beings, through the whole universe, repeat that language.

If you ask the saints in heaven—patriarchs, prophets, apostles, who being dead yet speak; if you ask the faithful upon earth who are winning silent but arduous victories; if you ask these, how they triumphed, they all point to Jesus. Through him they have conquered; he was, and is, and shall forever be the absorbing object of their gratitude. If you ask the angels how the Lamb that was slain appears in their eyes, they fix their gaze upon him in rapt and adoring worship. When from the portals of heaven he descended upon his amazing mission, they flew down to earth and charmed the night with heavenly harmonies. As he moved through scene after scene of ever deepening sorrow; they followed him in wonder.—"He was seen of angels." Who can tell their emotions as they clustered about his cross? or their delight as they escorted him back through the everlasting gates? or the thoughts of adoration and love with which they fall before his throne? "And I beheld and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing." The Holy Spirit is the great teacher who is to guide us into all truth. If we enquire what is his estimate of Jesus, we find that his great ministry, his

single office is to exalt and glorify this precious Redeemer. "He shall glorify me, for he shall receive of mine and shall shew it unto you." Lastly, in himself, but especially in his mediatorial work and character, Jesus is ineffably precious to his Father. "Behold my servant whom I have chosen, mine elect in whom I delight."—Of old, from everlasting, he was the Father's "daily delight;" but he was still more dear to that Father's heart in his humiliation and sufferings. "Therefore doth my father love me, because I lay down my life that I might take it again." Twice, as if the divine complacency could not be repressed, a voice from the excellent glory exclaimed, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."

Encompassed by such a cloud of witnesses, let us turn away from other objects and be ever looking unto Jesus; looking to him with eyes of faith, of love, of ardent desire; looking to him directly, fixedly, confidently, joyfully; looking to him for all we need, and for all that he is made of God unto us—for "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption;" looking to him for strength during all the conflicts of life; in the last trying hour, looking to him for victory,—closing our eyes on the whole world, and seeing only him upon whom our ravished gaze shall forever feast in the realms of light and love and blessedness.

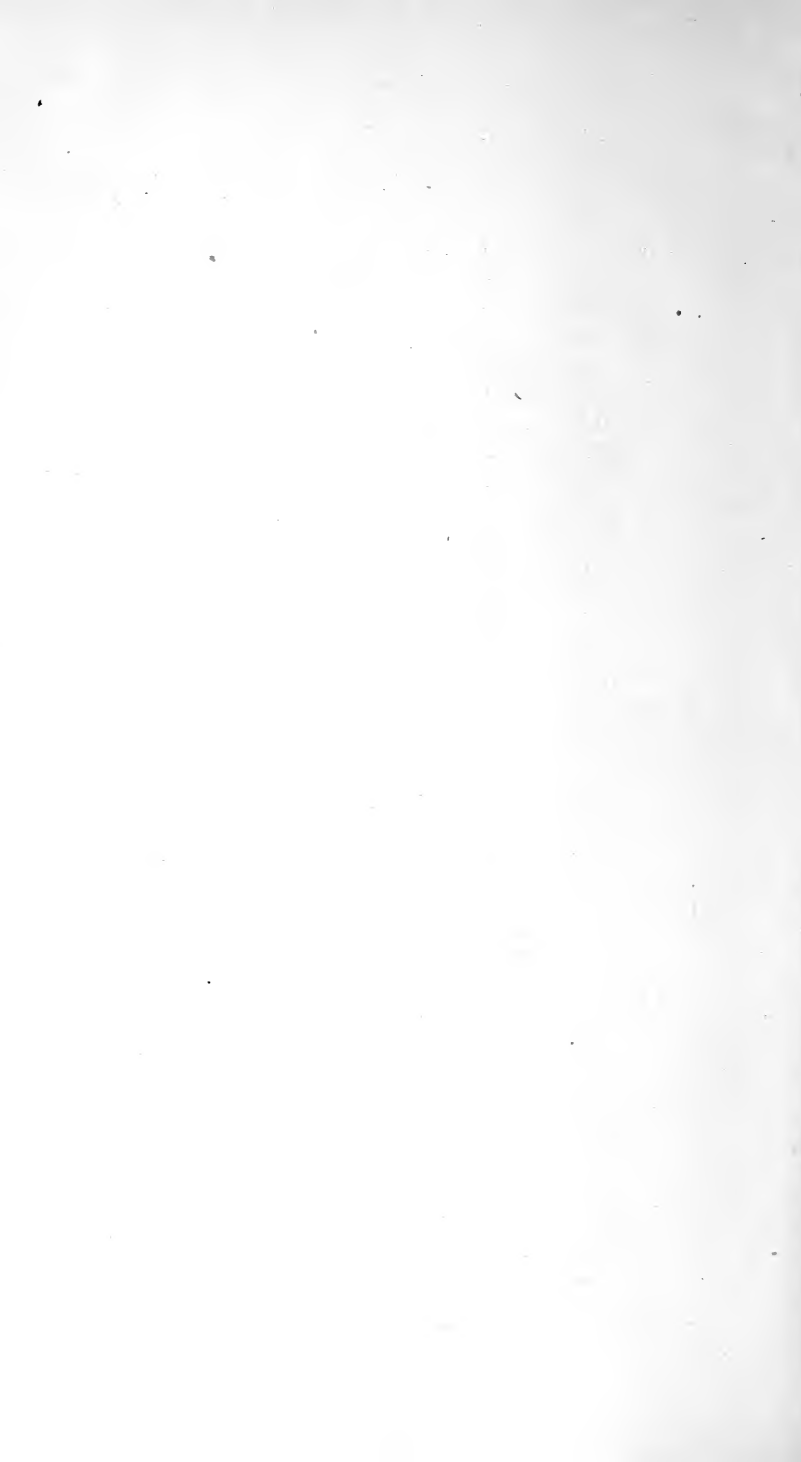
One other fruit of this discourse. If Jesus be precious to us, we will try to shew it in our conduct. In this application of the subject, let me come home to each of you and ask, "What think you of Christ?" In your practical estimate of things, what place has he? His name, his truth, his cause, his church, his honor, his interests—are these dear to you? Do you feel a deep concern in them? Are they more to you than riches, honor, worldly distinction, sensual gratification, health, life? If so, "your beloved is yours and you are his;" he is precious to you, and you are precious to him. Precious in his eyes are your life and happiness now. He says, "Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honorable and I have loved thee." Precious in his sight shall be your death. And you shall be his in that day when he makes up his jewels.

That Jesus is not precious to many here, I have only too much cause to fear. Alas, that a succession of trifles which deceive and defraud the soul, can excite such an infinity of passions in the heart, and this adorable Saviour awaken not a single emotion. But I trust there are those here who have been sympathizing in all I have uttered, to whom he is precious, and to them I say, Let us prove what he is to us by proving in our conduct what we are to him, by keeping his commandments.—“Ye are my friends if ye do whatever I command you;” by “esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt;” by honoring his sanctuary—the place where he promises to commune with us, and to which we should repair with the eagerness of those who hasten to meet one whom they love; in fine, by shrinking from no duty and welcoming any sacrifice for his sake.

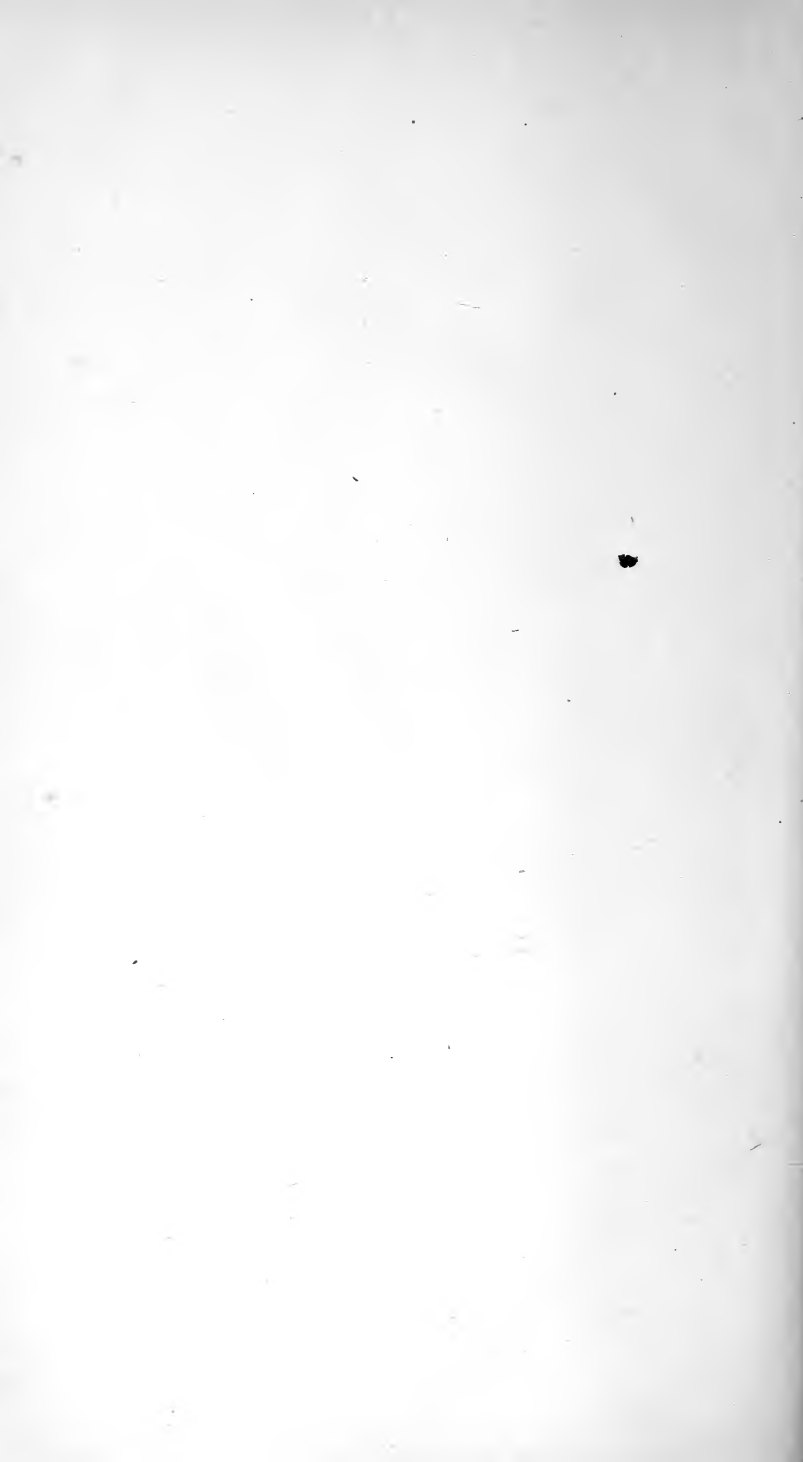
O you who have hitherto neglected this Saviour, but who desire to be his, come, he is calling you to his embrace. “To-day if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.” But especially you who love him, if Christ truly lives in your hearts by faith, let him live and reign in your lives. The question is not one of strength, but of faith and love. Surrounded by a world in which “all mind their own things, not the things of Jesus Christ,” let us bind these things to our hearts as a diadem, and make them the object of our cares and toils and sacrifices. While all about us, even among the professed people of God, selfishness is the supreme law, let us look upon the precious Lamb of God, until this vile passion dies within us, until his beauty has tarnished all other charms, has captivated all our hearts, and brought our entire being under the warm vital power of a love which shall constrain us to live not for ourselves, but for him who died for us and rose again.

May God grant us these blessings. May he so reveal his Son in us, that he may indeed be to our souls “the chiefest among ten thousand and altogether lovely.” O for less of an abstract, controversial Christianity, and more of a living, loving, personal Christ. O for souls that, like the harp, turn every passing wind into music, and all whose resonancy is of a precious Jesus.

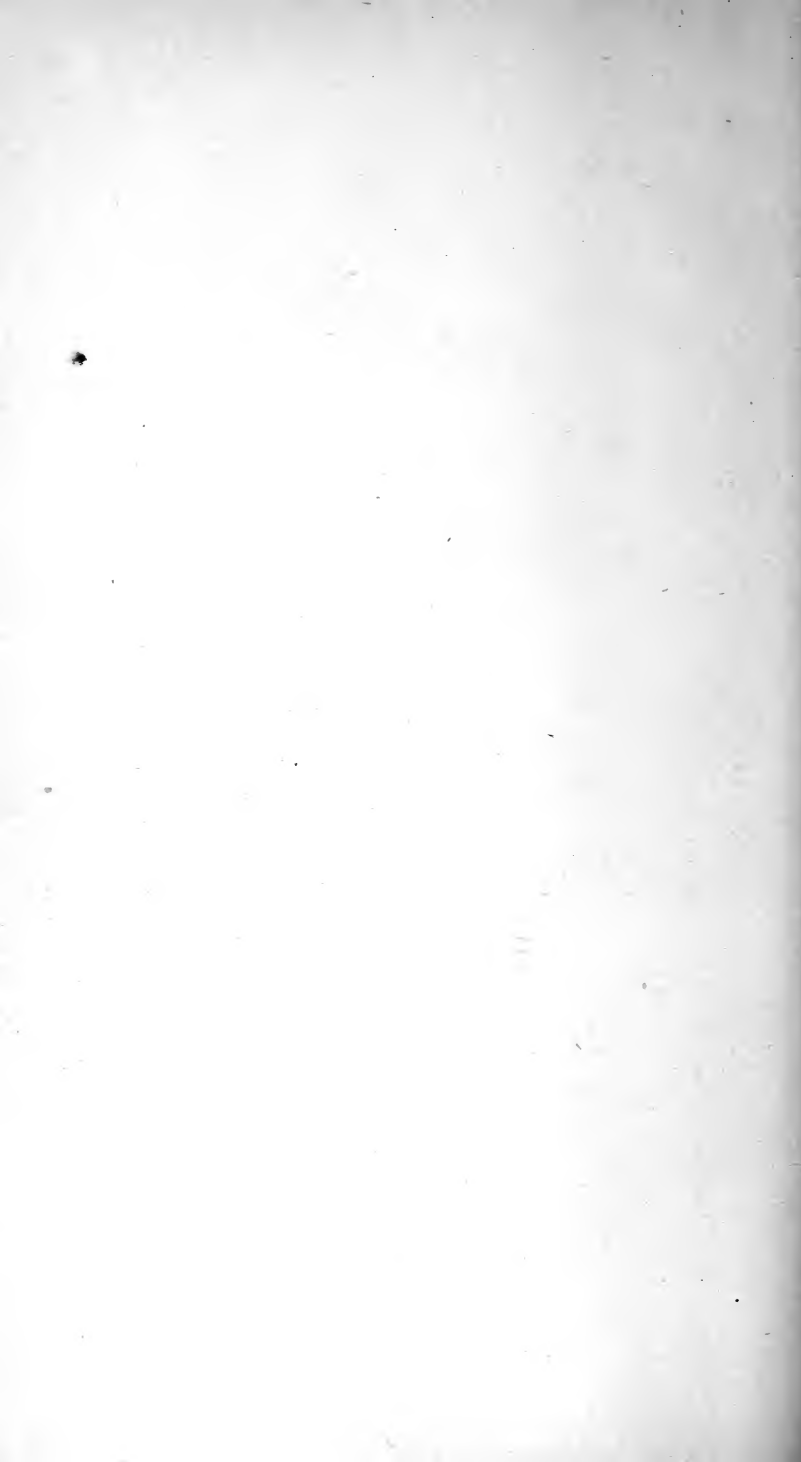
Precious Jesus! who dwelling in ineffable glory didst for me stoop to take my nature in its meanest and most mournful conditions. Precious Jesus! who for me didst welcome a life of poverty and shame, becoming a homeless, houseless man, with men's faces hidden from thee. Precious Jesus! who for me didst meekly lie in the garden, and in cruel anguish, with the blood oozing from every pore of thy body, didst plead with the Father in strong supplications and tears. Precious Jesus! who for me was led like a lamb to the bar of Pilate, and then to Herod; and for me didst so patiently bear all those scoffs and contumelies while they put on thee a robe of derision, and smote thee, and spat upon thee, and pressed a crown of sharp thorns into thy brow until the blood trickled down thy pale face. Precious Jesus! who for me was nailed to the cross as it lay on the ground, yet uttered no cry while the cruel spikes were driven into thy tender, quivering nerves and fibres. Precious Jesus! who for me—hanging on that cross—endured all the insults and agony which earth and hell could inflict upon thee. O Jesus, all this, and all this for me;—let all this make thee preciousness itself to me. Forever, Saviour, I am thine. Take my heart; thy love hath conquered it.—And when thou hast taken, keep it; let thy love fix every thought, feeling, desire, affection for time and for eternity.



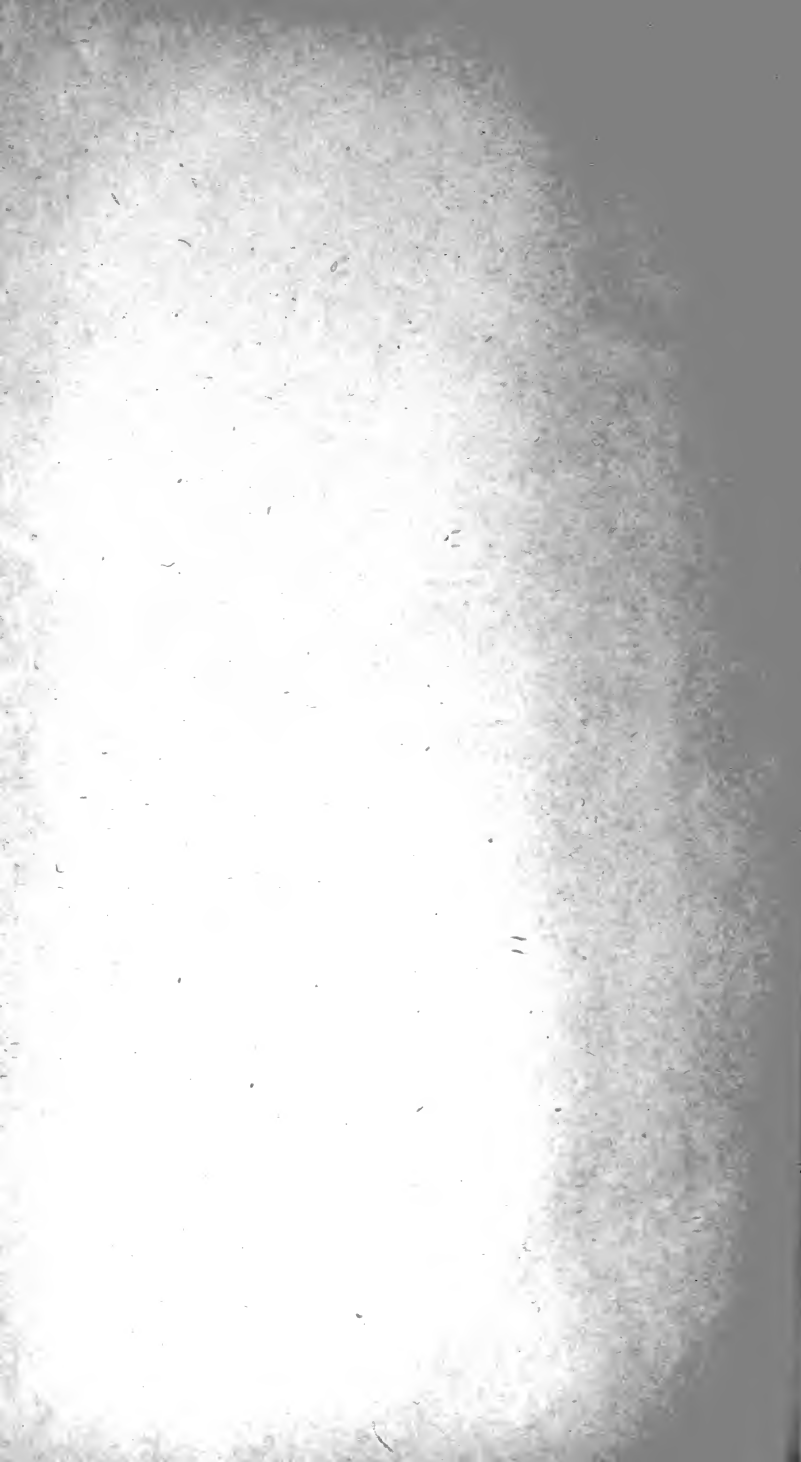














LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 029 819 210 A